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JOHN GOLLAN

SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY — SOME PROBLEMS

The Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in Retrospect

Document:

On Overcoming the Cult of the Individual and its Consequences

Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, June 30th, 1956

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Marxism Today

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Editorial Comments

FEBRUARY 1976 is the 20th anniversary of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, one of the most significant congresses in the history of the international communist movement.

We thought it correct, therefore, that this January issue of *Marxism Today* should review in retrospect the decisions and the effects of the Congress.

We feel confident that John Gollan's article on "Socialist Democracy—Some Problems" will give rise to a far reaching discussion. We thought, too, that our readers would like to have readily available the June 1956 Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU, which we publish as a *Document* in this issue.

We ask those who wish to participate in the discussion not to delay too long in sending in their contributions.

JOINT DECLARATION OF FRENCH AND ITALIAN COMMUNISTS

Discussions took place in Paris (on September 29, 1975) and in Rome (on November 15) between Georges Marchais, General Secretary of the French and Enrico Berlinguer, General Secretary of the Italian Communist Party. Other comrades from the leadership of both parties participated. The joint communiqué resulting from the discussions (*Humanité*, November 18, 1975) is an extremely important document.

After describing the effects of the deepening general crisis of capitalism, the lesson is drawn that the forces of imperialism try to make use of the crisis to attack the economic, social and political gains of the working class and the people.

But, the statement continues, "the working class and the popular masses can, by struggle, defeat these attacks, win fresh gains, open up the road of new social and democratic progress". For this reason the parties, both of whom are struggling to defend the immediate interests of the workers and popular masses, "work at the same time for a policy of deep democratic reforms which will permit the solution of the grave economic, social and political problems of their countries". Out of the present crisis, "the necessity arises more sharply than ever for France and Italy to develop democracy, to make it advance in the direction of socialism". The two parties are acting in different concrete situations, and follow, therefore, policies that are appropriate to these conditions. But, at the same time, they realise the common character of the essential problems and of the necessary solutions.

DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM

Of particular interest are the sections of the joint statement on the struggle for democracy and of the relation of the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism.

> "Italian and French Communists consider that the advance to socialism and the building of socialist society, which they are putting forward as the perspective in their respective countries, must be achieved within the framework of a continuous democratisation of economic, social and political life. Socialism will constitute a higher stage of democracy and liberty; it will be fully developed democracy (*democratie poussée 'jusqu'au bout'*).
>
> "In this spirit, all freedoms which are the result of the great bourgeois democratic revolutions, or of this century's great popular struggles led by the working class, must be safeguarded and developed. This applies to the freedom of thought and expression, of publication, of meeting and association, of demonstration, of travel at home and abroad, to the inviolability of private life, to religious liberties, to the complete freedom of expression for philosophical, cultural and artistic trends and opinions.
>
> "French and Italian Communists stand for the plurality of political parties—including the right of existence and activity of opposition parties. They stand for the freedom to form and the possibility of democratic alternation of majorities and minorities, for the secular character and democratic functioning of the State, for the independence of justice. They stand equally for the free activity and independence of trade unions. They attach great importance to the development of democracy in enterprises so that workers can participate with real rights in management and can dispose of extended powers of decision. The democratic decentralisation of the State must give a more and more important role to regions and local collectives who must have a broad autonomy for the exercise of their functions."

The joint statement examines the problems of the socialist transformation of society. Such a transformation, the statement continues:

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"can only develop from the broadest struggle of powerful mass movements ranging the majority of the people around the working class. It demands the existence of democratic institutions that are fully representative of popular sovereignty, the safeguarding and extension of their powers, the free exercise of universal, direct and proportional suffrage. It is within such a context that the two parties—which always have respected and will respect the verdict of universal suffrage—conceive of the accession of the working classes to the direction of the State."

ANTI-MONOPOLY ALLIANCES

The statement develops the concept shared by the two parties of a broad anti-monopoly alliance:

"The two parties consider that to assure the success of the struggle against monopoly capital—the principal enemy of the working class and the popular masses—it is essential to bring about a free understanding (*entente*) between different social and political forces, within which the united working class must affirm its capacity to exercise a leading role. These broad alliances are necessary both at the present stage and for the building of socialism.

"The development of solid and durable co-operation between Communists and Socialists constitutes the foundation of this alliance.

"Today broad Catholic circles are becoming more and more conscious of the contradiction which exists between, on the one hand, the reality of imperialism and of capitalism, and, on the other, their deep aspirations for the brotherhood of man, social justice, the affirmation of the highest moral values, the full development of personality. Such an evolution creates growing possibilities for the meeting (*rencontre*) of Communists, of the whole of the forces of the working class, with the popular forces of Christian inspiration, who can and must play an important role in the creation of a new society."

FRENCH, ITALIAN AND JAPANESE COMMUNIST PARTIES ON DEMOCRACY

There have been important joint communiqués, too, arising from separate visits of delegations of the French and Italian Communist Parties to Japan, both on the invitation of the CC of the Japanese Communist Party. The French Party was in Japan from October 12-19, last year, and joint discussions took place with Japanese Party representatives on October 13, 14 and 18.

Once again the joint communiqué stresses that the two parties, struggling in different conditions, but both in developed capitalist countries, "reach similar analyses and positions on many problems".

And once again, one of the problems where there was a very similar approach proved to be of the relations of the fight for democracy to the fight for socialism. The communiqué was published on October 21 simultaneously in *Akahata* and *Humanité*. Both parties stressed the necessity of fighting every form of anti-Communism in their action for unity and democratic change:

"the two delegations emphasised the importance of the struggle that the two parties are developing for the defence and the expansion of democracy, individual and collective freedom, against the authoritarianism of ruling circles of their respective countries. They pointed out that, in the stage of democratic change as well as in the future socialist society envisaged by both parties in their respective countries, the two parties will safeguard and develop all liberties for the consolidation of human dignity. They attach special importance to the full guarantee of freedom of speech, assembly, association, belief including free activity of religions. They also declared for pluralism, that is, for free activities of parties and political groups both in power and in opposition."

The Italian Communist Party delegation had talks with representatives of the Japanese Communist Party on September 22-23 and 27, and a joint communiqué was issued on September 30. Again in the course of the communiqué, which covered a number of issues, the problem of democracy was stressed:

"Japan and Italy, in which there are respectively different conditions, now face political, economic, social and cultural-moral crises. The depth of these crises is not simply due to the periodic crises of the capitalist economy, but to the structural crisis of the world capitalist economy following the Second World War, to the aggravation of the contradictions in every field, accumulated over a long period in the two countries and to the bankruptcy of the basic policy of the ruling circles of both countries in this situation.

"To break away from such crises in developed capitalist countries it is necessary to defend, expand and strengthen democracy in all fields of national life—political, economic and social. This is the way to advance the unity and struggle of broad sections of forces on the basis of national consensus. At the same time both sides reaffirmed that they will fully guarantee—in the future socialist society envisaged by both parties—pluralism, freedom of speech, thought, religion including freedom of its propagation, and freedom of cultural and artistic expression."

INTERNATIONAL DEBATE ON POPULAR FRONT

The Eleventh International Conference of Labour Movement Historians met in Austria from September 9-13. Historians from East and West once again had an opportunity to spend the best part of a week in both formal and informal discussion in a hotel in the Danubian city of Linz.

The first theme this year was "The Policy of the United and People's Front in the Anti-fascist Struggle of the Labour Movement till 1939." Debate centred around the

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main report of K. K. Shirinya (USSR) and Horst Schumacher (GDR) and the opposing theses put forward by the West German historians Erich Matthias and Hermann Weber in their co-report asserting that "the initiation of the Popular Front was subordinated to the interests of foreign and security policy defined by the Soviet Party and state leadership."

The second theme was "Class Struggle and National Question in the Period of the Second International (till the First World War)". The main report on this was written by the Polish historian Feliks Tych with co-reports by Hans Mommsen from Western Germany, Peretz Merchav from Israel and Ivan Lunyov from the USSR. One of the interesting controversies that developed was around Mommsen's contention that the theoretical deficiencies of the Second International on the national question had roots in Marx' and Engels' alleged serious underestimation of nationalism, on which he was challenged, notably by Ernst Wangermann from Leeds.

The next Linz Conference will be from September 14-18, 1976, on the following themes: (1) Party and Trade Union till 1917; (2) Methodological Problems of Trade Union History.

In 1977 the whole conference will be devoted to the question of the international labour movement and the national liberation movement in the colonies and semi-colonies up till 1939.

The organisers are anxious to increase the number of historians coming from Britain. Those interested and with sufficient knowledge of German to follow the proceedings in that language should write to: Internationale Tagung der Historiker der Arbeiterbewegung (ITH), Altes Rathaus, Wipplingerstrasse 8, A-1010 Vienna, Austria.

MARXIST POLITICAL ECONOMY

So far as new book-titles are concerned, 1975 looks like being a peak year for Marxism; and in this respect the Penguin Education series and Penguin Modern Economics texts are high on the list. Arun Bose's *Marxian and Post-Marxian Political Economy: an Introduction* (Penguin Books 1975, pp 330, £1.60) is an interesting example of the latter. But despite its description in the sub-title, it is scarcely food for the beginner, but is of interest primarily to the fairly sophisticated reader. As Professor K. Alexander of Strathclyde explains in his Editorial Foreword:

> "it is a difficult book, partly because it integrates much that has already been written about Marxist economics by professional economists and also because it is, in parts, highly original and path-breaking. . . . Readers who have not taken a formal course will find it very hard going in places."

The author is Senior Lecturer in Economics at Kiron Mai College, Delhi University. Learning his economics (and some of his Marxism) at Cambridge just before the war, he "later spent ten years as a full-time Marxist Communist 'activist' in the Indian Communist movement (1940-50)", as he explains in his Preface. He adds this comment:

> "Whenever I tried to use Marxian political economy —as was the current fashion among Communists— as a sacrosanct, dogmatic theology, the contrast between its easy but ephemeral success in winning recruits at political conferences or in the streets, and its limitations as a potent instrument for revolutionary political action was brought home to me very sharply."

This sentiment or experience could be said to be the background text for this work, which is an attempt at expounding and discussing a non-dogmatic and scientifically-based Marxian economic theory, embodying in it all that is positively valuable in economic thought and writing since Marx's day. This latter, indeed, is what is meant by the reference to "post-Marxian political economy" in the title and in Parts 2 and 3 of the book— namely, the "absorption of the insights and results of modern economics into the Marxian theoretical system". One thing which he claims as "a novel feature of the approach adopted" is "the rejection of the dogma of the Ricardian socialists that labour is the only source of wealth and value, as the basis of a theory of capitalist exploitation" (p. 34). In later chapters of Part 2 the author turns his attention perhaps a little *too* summarily, to the economics of socialism and of the transition thereto.

Almost too many issues are raised (especially methodological ones) and too many references made (both to other authors and also back and forward to other sections of the book) for it to be easy reading. The author is erudite, sophisticated and many-sided; and the book is certainly stimulating as reading for the thoughtful. Whether or not one agrees with all the issues raised and his handling of them (and not everyone probably will), one must grant it to be a very welcome contribution to high-level discussion among Marxian, near-Marxian, and possibly even non-Marxian economists.

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Socialist Democracy—Some Problems

The 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in Retrospect

John Gollan

(We invite discussion contributions on this article of up to 2,000 words)

This year will see the twentieth anniversary of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) which exposed the crimes and mass repressions of the Stalin era.

The media and the apologists of capitalism will use the occasion to stir up the anti-Soviet campaign in the new period of detente.

But for Communists it will be a time to review two decades of momentous progress in socialist advance, in the world Communist movement, national liberation and the struggle for peace. For the 20th Congress acted as a catalyst in carrying forward vital developments already emerging in the Soviet Union and causing great political struggle, as well as those involved in the growth of the world socialist system and its attendant problems. It opened up a new stage in the progress, unity and diversity of the international Communist movement.

Many of the wider problems dealt with in the Congress had already emerged on the world scene as a consequence of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International (1935), the experience of the parties in the Second World War, the development of the conception of new ways to socialism raised by French Communist leader Thorez, the Italian Communist Party, and our 1951 programme, *The British Road to Socialism*. The great value of the Congress in this respect was that it both reflected these developments and gave them renewed impetus backed by the great authority of the CPSU.

The anniversary is, however, a moment to examine again a critical phase of revolutionary history scarred with tragedy, the so-called Stalin personality cult, the exposure of which shook the whole international Communist movement but from which it emerged with new strength. What follows is not an exhaustive analysis, but an examination of some of the problems.

Such a review poses a question. Is the 20-year-old estimate in the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU "On Overcoming the Cult of the Individual and its Consequences" fully adequate?

All the many-sided aspects of the 20th Congress have to be seen in their totality, not only the crimes, but—to quote the resolution—"The important theoretical theses the Congress laid down on the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, on the possibility of preventing wars in modern times, on the multiplicity of forms of the transition of nations to socialism" and, we could add, the development of the united front.

A Profound Process Initiated

The point to note is that the Congress initiated a profound process in the socialist world, it did not end it. This fact should be emphasised in estimating the resolution and the circumstances in which it was drafted, including the sudden and revelationary nature of the 20th Congress itself. While the general political lines of the Congress were advanced in a public report, the cult was dealt with in the main in the private report and private session. This method, no doubt explained by the political battle in the leadership of the CPSU prior to the Congress, added to the problem. A determined rearguard action was waged by Molotov and others to reverse the Congress decisions. In the years that followed there was a continuing process of development of Soviet democracy, which the Congress presaged, but which has not been without setbacks.

The main consequences were positive, with the rectification of some of the errors of the previous period, but the process was stormy, involving acute problems in Poland and the Hungarian counter-revolution.

In the international Communist movement

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there has been an increasing recognition of the fact that unity on common objectives must be based on the right of each party to autonomy and to put forward its own policy for the advance of its people to socialism. This process has developed through three world conferences—1957, 1960 and 1969—and in subsequent years.

It has been a rich and complex period with many difficulties, but a picture nevertheless of great positive world advance, despite the setbacks. Advance is never just an easy, steady, uninterrupted progression.

It is necessary to state this right at the start, for the Marxist view is based on what is new and developing, the conflict of the new and the old. By this criterion the 20th Congress and subsequent developments have been profoundly progressive.

Our essential starting point must be the world significance of the October socialist revolution, which was an historic breakthrough and a climactic point in human development. From then on there were two world systems, socialism and capitalism. The fact that the socialist system emerged victoriously from the supreme test of the Second World War put an end to all imperialist hopes of destroying it.

Just as this victory showed that the basic socialist foundations of the Soviet Union were unshaken, despite the crimes in the period of Stalin's leadership, so the 20th Congress exposure and rectification of these was a major factor in achieving the decisive world position of the Soviet Union and the world socialist system today.

In Two Decades

The two decades since the Congress have demonstrated the superiority of the socialist economic system over the capitalist system. In the world economic survey of *The Times* on September 1, 1975, a leading article posed the issue "Is the world economy [the capitalist economy—J. G.] merely suffering from a temporary disturbance" or "a much more malign secular trend", while the survey's article on the Soviet Union remarked: "The sense of security and ordered purpose in Soviet society contrasts more starkly than ever with the constant political and economic drift from crisis to crisis in so much of the world."

This contrast—continuing crisis of capitalism in its imperialist phase and of advancing socialism—is the central issue of world development.

This is not only a question of economic indices. It is also one of the purpose and content of a social system. The problems of capitalism arise out of its class nature. Despite its advanced technique, it is based on working-class exploitation and private capitalist profit. Hence arise its fundamental and insoluble problems—continuing crisis, deepening social division and contrasts of poverty and riches. There is a crisis in bourgeois democracy and in political and institutional structures. The socialist system, with power in the hands of the working class, has a deeply humane purpose. It is not only economically superior, it leads to the abolition of exploitation, the widest satisfaction of human, economic, social and cultural needs.

Hence the absence of crisis. Its problems are essentially problems of growth and further economic and social development, including that of socialist democracy and its political institutions.

Second, the shattering of the world colonial system after the Second World War has proceeded apace these last 20 years. In this the economic and political power of the world socialist system has made a decisive contribution. Outstanding here has been the victory of the Vietnamese revolution, the Cuban revolution, the developments in Latin America, despite the setback in Chile, the profound developments in Africa and the new relation of the raw material producers and the capitalist world.

Separate, but also arising out of the crisis of capitalism, is the process of the liquidation of the left-over fascist régimes in Europe—Greece, Portugal and Spain.

Third, there is the important conception emphasised by the 20th Congress of the possibility of preventing a new world war, on which the Chinese Communist Party disagreed. The 30 years since the Second World War have confirmed the correctness of this new theoretical thesis. It has been a period of intense struggle, in which the socialist world, the national liberation struggle, the world working class and progressive movements have each played their part. And a decisive part was the peace programme of the 24th Congress of the CPSU. The growing process of detente is the result and is a springboard for further confident effort to prevent world war.

Further, the politics and conception of different national ways to socialism stressed by the 20th Congress have become the basis of new and powerful progress in the international Communist movement. Here one can pinpoint the stage reached in the parties in the developed capitalist countries and in particular in Western Europe. We will consider this in some more detail later. But the key conceptions have been established in political struggle; the possibility of peaceful democratic development to socialism without civil war, of working-class unity, the plurality of parties, etc. It is, of course, a process of development different to that of the Russian revolution.

The main ideas of the 20th Congress, liberating ideas, have been borne out by events. These ideas spelled out by the Congress, but arising out of the

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objective historical possibilities resulting from the crisis of capitalism, justify the Congress analysis and resolutions on these issues. The measure of inadequacy arises on the other central issue of the Congress which has been defined by the CPSU as the cult of the individual.

THE CONGRESS AND THE CULT

The lines of analysis of this in the Central Committee resolution can be summarised as follows:

> "The question should be examined against the background of the objective, concrete historical conditions under which socialism was built in the USSR, and also some subjective factors arising from Stalin's personal qualities."

After dealing with the world significance of the October Revolution to which I have referred, the resolution deals with this historical background. It was the first experience, the practical proving of many truths which up to then had been known only in theoretical outline. The Soviet Union "was like a besieged fortress in capitalist encirclement". After the civil war there were new military incursions, but the greatest menace was the rise of fascism in the thirties and the imminent war. All this was further complicated by the class battle to determine the country's socialist direction—"who beats whom".

After Lenin's death a bitter struggle took place over Trotskyism and the rightists. At the centre of the matter was the key issue, the possibility of developing socialism in one country. Socialist industrialisation, collective agriculture and a cultural revolution had to be carried out in unimaginable difficulties, including age-old backwardness, to reshape the country in the shortest possible time with no aid from the outside.

So the general conclusion on this historical setting is made:

> "This complicated international and internal situation called for iron discipline, tireless enhancement of vigilance, stringent centralisation of leadership, which could not but have had an adverse effect on the development of some democratic forms. In the bitter struggle against the whole world of imperialism our country had to accept some limitations to democracy, which were justified logically by our people's struggle for socialism in conditions of capitalist encirclement."

But, the resolution continues, these limitations were regarded as temporary and due to be removed "as the strength of the Soviet state grew and the forces of democracy and peace developed throughout the world". The construction of socialism in such conditions was "a heroic exploit" of the Soviet people. So far in this summary we do not touch the central issue of the Stalin deformations and of course all parts of it are bound up with this. We will consider what the resolution later says on this.

But even on the basis of this partial summary of the first part of the CC resolution, it would appear that the term "the cult of the individual" has a somewhat limiting connotation. This historical setting, the play of forces, methods of work, the development of the revolution's institutions and the subsequent problems, cannot really be contained in terms of the cult of one man, although providing the framework in which such a cult could grow. Even when Stalin left the scene, the task of uprooting the deformations of the system, which were alien to Marxism, proved to be difficult and protracted.

Looking at the history of the construction of socialism before the war these objective circumstances serve to underline the magnitude of the achievement of the transition to socialism, without which the Soviet Union could never have emerged victoriously from the war.

But it appears to me a weakness of the analysis is its starting point. That is, after Lenin's death. Surely, the political problems of Lenin's time, a period of great difficulties, which he dealt with thoroughly in his later speeches and writings, are germane to the problem. Lenin posed the key questions of Soviet development. In my view, his successors did not tackle them in the way he intended, and this contributed in no small degree to the subsequent grave situation.

LENIN'S POSITION

We have to look briefly at the particular conditions of the Russian revolution. Current bourgeois argument is that the Soviet system, the one-party state, the dictatorship of the proletariat, is by definition undemocratic. There has to be "our" system of contending classes and their class parties, or there is no democracy. This line of argument ignores the issue which is at the heart of any political system, namely, which class exercises political power and what economic system prevails. British democracy is bourgeois democracy, in which the working class has won vital democratic rights but in which the capitalist class exercises political power. At times of emergency these democratic rights can be suspended and there is today an increasing threat of authoritarian rule. Bourgeois democracy as a system, even in its heyday, only existed in a relatively small part of the world, the so-called developed capitalist countries, superimposed on colonial enslavement of the vast mass of the world by these countries.

This capitalist presentation ignores the real

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questions of development posed to Russia by the collapse of Tsarism. For Lenin, as he constantly reiterated, the dictatorship of the proletariat was dictatorship against the exploiters but democracy for the proletariat and its allies, for the majority of the people. Political power had to be exercised by the workers in alliance with the peasantry, the overwhelming majority of the population. This was the issue, comments E. H. Carr in his critical but important many-volumed work—*The Bolshevik Revolution*—"which class exercised power":

> "There was no opposition in this sense between dictatorship and representative government: the 'dictatorship of the bourgeoisie' which was the antithesis of the dictatorship of the proletariat was generally exercised through the medium of representative government. The emotional overtones of the word 'dictatorship' as associated with the rule of the few or of one man were absent from the minds of Marxists who used the phrase." (Vol. 1, p. 151.)

Democratic Development

While Lenin was prepared to use force against the enemies of the revolution, who were trying to overthrow it, and it was used, his main idea for the further development of the system was essentially and profoundly democratic.

In the stage between September and November, Lenin wrote of the possibility that once the elected Soviets, the indigenous institutional and democratic form thrown up by the revolution, had seized power from the Provisional Government, itself unelected, a peaceful development of the revolution was possible—"peaceful election of deputies by the people and a peaceful struggle of parties inside the Soviets; they could test the programmes of the various parties in practice, and power could pass peacefully from one party to another" (*Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 67-68). It was, he added, an opportunity rarely present in revolutionary history.

In the event this peaceful development did not take place.

The main parties concerned, along with the Bolsheviks, after the revolutionary seizure of power were the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks.

Carr traces the developments in some detail: the attempts to overthrow the Bolsheviks by force and the subsequent alignment with imperialism and intervention. It was a period in which the opposition parties were not prepared to remain within legal limits. Power passed to the Bolsheviks, but, as Carr notes, "a strong reluctance remained to use that power without restraint". This period lasted more than two years. Carr's conclusion is:

> "The failure of Menshevism, a failure marked both by tragedy and futility, was a result of its alienation from Russian conditions. The Russian social and political order provided none of the soil in which a bourgeois democratic régime could flourish."
> (Vol. 1, p. 41.)

So contention, debate and democracy became centred in the party and the Soviets.

Re-reading Lenin's works of this critical period, one is struck by several outstanding points. The circumstances in which the revolution developed were stark and grim. Utter devastation resulted from the war, the subsequent civil war and imperialist intervention, and there was a virtual annihilation of large-scale industry. Agriculture had to be revived. There was the terrible cultural backwardness, which Lenin called barbarism. There was the revolt of the peasants and the temporary retreat to the New Economic Policy which made possible a certain capitalist revival, with all the problems which that caused. The hopes raised by the European revolutionaries had collapsed, so that the Russian revolution had to proceed alone, cut off from European industry, and raise itself up by its own bootlaces. What had been till then a question of theoretical debate became a practical problem of critical historical importance. Without the revolution elsewhere in Europe, would Russia relapse back to capitalism and defeat, or go forward to socialism? But the process, as the 1956 CPSU resolution notes, took place not only in difficult material and objective circumstances, but also in conditions of fierce debate within the party around the Trotskyist opposition which denied the possibility of victory for socialism.

What were the essential issues raised then by Lenin, and which flow over into the debate on Stalin and the problems posed in the 20th Congress? At the risk of over-simplification, they were the party and its relation to the masses, the trade union question and the development of the state.

The Party and the Masses

All of these were publicly and democratically debated in the party. At various times Lenin clashed with Trotsky, Bukharin and others, and all on the background of great difficulties and threatening new military intervention. Because of these dangers the party at the 10th Congress (1921) outlawed organised factionalism as incompatible with the central unified leadership which the country and the situation required. But such was Lenin's authority and that of his closest associates that he still held the disparate elements of the leadership together. The party was a vehicle of leadership, but this was based on democratic contention and real debate and it had an essential

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inner dynamic. How was this to continue after he died and differences became acute?

The tendency for the administrative side of the party to prevail and predominate in the circumstances of the time was always there. But Lenin constantly polemised against purely administrative measures compared with political mass work and democratic persuasion, as he showed in his methods of work as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. He was always stressing the political role of the party, to mobilise the masses and bring them into action alongside the party, into creative work by persuasion and example. The non-party masses, above all the peasantry and non-party specialists, had to be drawn in. He was constantly preoccupied with these issues. After all, the party, compared with the huge population, was very small indeed. At December 1925, for example, even after the Lenin enrolment, there were 911,000 members and candidates; 534,000 were workers, almost one in four of those employed in heavy industry, but only 216,000 were peasants; that is, only 0.37 per cent of the total peasantry. (*Report of 14th Congress.*)

The Role of Trade Unions

Of critical importance was the debate on the role of the trade unions in the period of transition from war communism to peace. Lenin's chief opponent here was Trotsky, who wanted to tighten the screws of war communism and to "shake up" the unions as against the party's position of stimulating democratic activity in the trade unions. Lenin stressed the unions' all-embracing character. They were not partisan and trade union members could not be required to subscribe "to any specific political views". He emphasised that they were not a state body, and not designed for coercion, but for education. The "unions stand, if I may say so, between the party and the government". And further, "we now have a state under which it is the business of the massively organised proletariat [in the unions—J. G.] to protect itself, while we, for our part, must use these workers' organisations to protect the workers from their state and to get them to protect our state. Both forms of protection are achieved through the peculiar interweaving of our state measures and our agreeing or 'coalescing' with our trade unions". (*Works,* Vol. 32, pp. 20-25.)

He also argued (*Works,* Vol. 33, p. 187) that compulsory state mediation could not take the place of strikes:

> "The strike struggle in a state where the proletariat holds political power can be explained and justified only by the bureaucratic distortions of the proletarian state and by all sorts of survivals of the old capitalist system in the government offices on the one hand, and by the political immaturity and cultural backwardness of the mass of the working people on the other."

He emphasised the responsibility of the unions in economic planning to co-operate at all levels, and in socialist industrialisation, to promote and train managers from the ranks, to draw up wages rates, etc., and, above all, to maintain contact with the masses. To an extent their role was contradictory; to co-operate with the state, yet not be of the state. It was voluntary, yet they had a responsibility in the application of state coercive measures when necessary. This arose out of the actual situation and would, Lenin stressed, persist for several decades.

In my view, these ideas were of the utmost importance, both for the development of socialist industry and for establishing the independent role of the unions in the new young socialist state.

Development of the Soviet State

The third great issue, the actual lines of development of the Soviet state, more and more preoccupied Lenin before his death. The problem was not only the all-pervading and suffocating bureaucracy inherited from Tsarism, but a new Soviet bureaucratism whose objective basis was illiteracy, which Lenin called cultural barbarism, and the actual conditions and enormous problems then prevailing.

While a new army, a new foreign office and new security forces had been created, it will surprise some who only recall Lenin's dictum that the bourgeois state had to be smashed (*State and Revolution*) to learn how much actually survived. At the Fourth Congress of the Communist International (1922) he said that in many ways the state, replete with the old forces, was working against the régime. "We took over the old machinery of state," he went on, "and that was our misfortune . . . it will take many years of hard work to improve the machinery, to remodel it and to enlist new forces." (*Works,* Vol. 33, pp. 428-429.) Further, he spoke of the need "to reorganise our machinery of state, which is utterly useless and which we took over in its entirety from the preceding epoch; during the past five years of struggle we did not, and could not, drastically reorganise it" (p. 474). ". . . Our state apparatus is to a considerable extent a survival of the past and has undergone hardly any serious change." There simply were not enough politically trained people to replace the old state apparatus, especially as in the first three years the best of the party's working-class forces had to be sent to the fronts in the civil war.

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There were the problems of defining the respective roles of the party and the state, where to separate and where to combine. There were the problems of training and promoting industrial workers, using the best non-party people (Communists were "a drop in the ocean").

At the 11th Congress (1922) Lenin returned to the unsatisfactory relations between the party and the government, saying that the Political Bureau was being choked with minor matters, that the People's Commissars should be more responsible for their own work, that the All-Russian Central Executive Committee should meet more regularly to discuss Bills before the People's Commissars did, etc.

But the main preoccupation was bureaucracy, examined in his article *"Better Fewer, but Better"* dealing with the need for a Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate to root it out, oversee decisions, etc. Significantly, too, in the light of the new conditions, he proposed "to reform the Cheka, define its functions and powers". The closer we approach unshakeable and lasting power, he observed, the more trade developed, the more important it was to put forward "the firm slogan of greater revolutionary legality and the narrower becomes the sphere of activity of the institution which matches the plotters blow for blow". (*Ninth Congress of the Soviets,* December 1921.) (*Works,* Vol. 33, pp. 176-77.)

He made specific proposals to the Political Bureau in the same year to narrow the jurisdiction of the Cheka, to narrow its right of arrest, to give more weight to the courts of law and for the Soviets to pass general regulations covering changes in the direction of "radical relaxations". (*Works,* Vol. 42, p. 366.) Even with all the sabotage and attempted assassinations, Lenin was seeking not arbitrariness, not unlimited power, but control and legality. In other words, the powers of the Security organs had to be strictly defined and controlled by the government. While it was necessary to avoid confusion on the relative roles of the party, the state and the mass organisations, all needed an extension of democracy.

We have dealt with this rough and limited treatment of the problems by Lenin as the developments under Stalin must be seen on this background. The start of the problem of the Cult would appear to be that Stalin, and the leadership of the party associated with him, took political decisions at critical moments in complete variance with Lenin's approach. It is in this sphere that the greatest and most tragic departure was made.

STALIN'S ROLE

We turn now to the critical part of the CPSU resolution, that concerning Stalin and the Cult. The analysis here consists of five essential points.

First, his positive contribution: "He was faithful to Marxism-Leninism, and as a theorist and organiser of high calibre he led the party's fight against the Trotskyists, right-wing opportunists, and bourgeois nationalists, against the intrigues of capitalists from without." This was the basis of his great popularity and authority. Then came the "mistaken practice" of associating all victories with his name, eulogies which made him dizzy so "that being the situation, the cult of the person of Stalin was gradually built up".

Second, there were Stalin's individual qualities, regarded as negative by Lenin. Reference is made to Lenin's 1922 Letter and so-called Testament. Stalin had great power as General Secretary (he was appointed in 1922) and Lenin observed: "I am not certain whether he will always be able to use this power with the required care." In his Letter of 1923 Lenin said that Stalin was excessively rude for a general secretary. "I therefore propose to the comrades," he wrote, "to consider the method by which to remove Stalin from his post, and to select another man for it who, above all, would differ from Stalin in only one quality, namely, greater tolerance, greater loyalty, greater politeness and a more considerate attitude towards the comrades, a less capricious temper, etc." The 13th Congress (1924) left Stalin as General Secretary on the understanding that he would heed the criticism. The resolution states that Stalin at first took note of the criticism, but that later he overestimated his own merits and came to think himself infallible.

The fact is that the 13th Congress continued with Stalin, although he had twice offered his resignation at the time.

Third, he began transferring some of the limitations on party and Soviet democracy, unavoidable in the bitter class struggle in the construction period and in the Second World War, "into the standards of party and governmental life, grossly flouting the Leninist principles of leadership". CC meetings and congresses were held irregularly and then not at all. "Stalin, in fact, was above criticism."

Fourth, a great harm was done, the resolution continues, by Stalin's thesis that in the advance to socialism the class struggle would sharpen. This was true for certain periods of the transition, but it "was advanced to the foreground in 1937, at a time when socialism had already triumphed in our country, when the exploiting classes and their economic base had been eliminated. In practice, this erroneous theoretical formula was used to justify gross violations of socialist law and mass repressions."

Finally, the resolution goes on, in these con-

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ditions a special status was created for the state security organisations which had enjoyed great popularity. For a long time this special status posed no danger, it says. But this changed after Stalin's personal control replaced party and government control and became aggravated "when the criminal gang of the agent of international imperialism, Beria, got to the head of the state security organisations. Serious violations of Soviet law and mass repressions then occurred."

It is necessary to examine these points further.

Key Issues of the Controversy

Stalin's role and that of his supporters in routing the Trotskyist and right opposition was undoubtedly of great historical significance. The key issues of the controversy for our consideration here are the building of socialism in one country and whether the revolution was socialist or not; the vital nature of the bloc between the workers and the peasantry; and the unity of the party.

While argued out in theoretical terms, these were, in fact, supreme issues of practical political and economic policy, which had to be operated. They involved the whole question of socialist industrialisation, the first and succeeding Five-Year Plans, the socialist transformation of the country, the creating of the modern Soviet working class and technical, specialist and administrative cadres, and the collectivisation of agriculture.

That the opposition line was defeated, the decisive social basis of the revolution was continued, a great socialist industry was created and collectivisation carried through, was, as the resolution correctly observed, an historic achievement without which the victory in the Second World War would have been impossible. It has proved decisive for world development ever since.

At the start the working class, the main force of the revolution, was war-weary, had suffered enormous losses and was dispersed with the collapse of heavy industry. Lenin even wrote that it had become declassed, that time was needed for it to recuperate and grow. By 1928/32 it had grown to 19 million, and then, as socialist industrialisation proceeded apace, reached 103 million out of a population of 206 million.

Collectivisation of agriculture transformed the countryside. It was a period of intense class struggle. But it was accompanied by gross errors of compulsion and coercion, condemned by Stalin himself in his speech *Dizzy with Success,* bringing even more acute strains. The main source of capital for expansion came from agriculture, with all the problems that entailed, for subsequent agricultural development.

Over 100,000 specialists a year (exclusive of military specialists) were coming from Higher Educational Institutes by 1938. Twenty thousand schools were built in the period 1933 to 1938, and the number of pupils and students of all grades numbered 34 million.

In one generation the Soviet Union had achieved the social transformation to an industrial society which took three generations of UK and US history. But with this profound difference: the industrial revolution was socialist. The growth of Stalin's popularity and authority was therefore understandable.

Stalin's Conception of the Party

For the period from Lenin's death to 1930, the different important issues were discussed in the party. Lenin's death and the subsequent crisis loosened the bond, and differences sharpened. Many of those in opposition went over to factionalism, to which they had also resorted in Lenin's day, though not all the opposition was, or should have been, qualified as factionalism. The point is, however, at this stage no state administrative measures were used. They were dealt with in open political debate; expulsion from the party came later.

However, the results were momentous in another way. Stalin and those who supported him began moving away, gradually at first, and then increasingly, from the lines of party, state and trade union development which had been proposed by Lenin. His attitude to the frequency of Central Committee meetings and Party Congresses were an example. In the first period after Lenin's death Congresses were numerous and regular. The 12th, when Lenin was still alive, was in 1923, then followed the 13th in May 1924, the 14th in December 1925, the 15th in 1927, the 16th in 1930, the 17th in 1934 and the 18th in 1939. In other words, during the great political debate up to 1930 the Congresses met, debated and decided policy. It was after the 16th that the gap widened and after the Second World War the 19th did not take place until 1952, a gap of 13 years.

A case could be made that a Congress in the Second World War period 1939 to 1945 would have been extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible. But no such argument could be used for the seven years between 1945 and 1952.

The matter was connected with Stalin's conception of the party. For example, he argued at the 13th Conference in 1924 that in war conditions "there can be no question of democracy [in the party], for it will have to be suspended. The party mobilises, we shall probably have to militarise it, and the question of inner-party democracy will disappear of itself." (*Works,* Vol. 6, p. 8.) This was never Lenin's conception, even at the height of the civil war and intervention. Between March

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1918 and April 1923, five Congresses were held and the CC met regularly.

The Foundation Congress of the Communist International took place in Moscow in 1919 and the Second Congress in 1920.

Of course, the problems of the unity of the party and its political functions and tasks were inextricably merged with the defeat of the opposition. Stalin's reports and articles did stress the need for criticism and self-criticism, but he always added that it had to be of a constructive and not of the opposition type.

With the opposition defeated he put the issue most clearly in his Report to the 18th Combined Plenum of the CC and Central Control Commission in April 1928: "The easy victory over the opposition is a most important gain for our party," but it brought the danger "that the party may be a prey to self-satisfaction, to self-admiration and begin to rest on its laurels." This could put an end to its onward progress, "and in order that this may not occur, we need self-criticism—not that malevolent and actually counter-revolutionary criticism which the opposition indulged in—but honest, frank, Bolshevik self-criticism". (*Works,* Vol. 11, p. 33.)

In fact, however, throughout the whole period criticism and self-criticism was being resisted. By the time of the 17th Congress, 1934, Stalin was talking about the "fear" of self-criticism in the party. This was associated with the growing tendency for the party to lay more and more stress on administration (the needs of the actual situation certainly placed unity at a premium), but also with Stalin's conception of the monolithic party. In the preceding period of 1921 to 1923 Lenin never used this term in connection with the party. Stalin, it would appear, first started to use the term in 1924. He said at the 13th Party Conference:

> "Never, for a single moment, have the Bolsheviks conceived of the party as anything but a monolithic organisation hewed from a single block, possessing a single will and in its work uniting all shades of thought into a single current of practical activities." (*Works,* Vol. 6, p. 23.)

Although this phrase is not in his *Foundations of Leninism,* it became with him an established principle. For example, he said at the CC Plenum, 1927, that "Leninism teaches that the proletarian party must be united and monolithic, that it must not have any factions or factional centres, that it must have a single party centre and a single will". (*Works,* Vol. 10, p. 82.) His authority for this stressing of monolithic is the 10th Congress resolution, but neither Lenin, nor the resolution, used this term. Lenin was against factions. A revolutionary party, to be effective, must have an accepted self-imposed discipline and united carrying out of decisions. But for Lenin, differences, debate, united action to carry out decisions, were all part of a whole. For Stalin, the term monolithic became increasingly identified with conformism. Certainly on the key issues of the debate on the opposition the policies had to be clearly decided, but there was room for differences on developments, particularly when reaching a new stage. Opposing and dissenting views are normal in the course of discussion. Not all differences should be considered as factional. The main task is to win agreement.

It was in this period 1923 to 1930 that the party, partly through circumstances, but also because of Stalin's rigid thought on the party, became excessively centralised, and discussion of fresh developments was curtailed. This led not only to stultification of thought, with schematic Marxism replacing creative Marxism, but also to creating conditions where mass repressions in the name of security could have a certain plausibility.

Stalin and the Soviet State

All this was bound up with the associated problems of the state, the relation of the party to the state and to the masses.

We proceed from the basis Lenin described ("who will conquer whom"), the subsequent forced industrialisation, the need to develop the state apparatus, acute class struggle, particularly in the countryside, the weakening of the Soviets there, sabotage and interference from the outside.

In his first treatment of Soviet democracy in 1925, Stalin spoke of eliminating old methods of administration and leadership in the countryside, of "revitalising" the Soviets, seeing that they were properly elected, "the line of implanting Soviet democracy in the countryside". This was an indication of the deep problems in the countryside and the weakness of the party among the peasants. He spoke of the need to reform the state apparatus, to eliminate bureaucracy, to promote the workers and peasants within the organs of government, and the close connection of the state apparatus and the rank and file. The Soviet state, he said, had to merge with the masses; if it stood above the masses it would become alien to them. He raised this particularly because the apparatus had grown by hundreds of thousands of mainly non-party people and as the importance of this apparatus grows "the more palpable becomes their pressure on the party, the more persistently do they strive to weaken the party's leadership, and the stronger becomes their resistance to the party". (*Works,* Vol. 7, p. 173.)

There had to be party leadership, but this did not mean that "our Party is identical with the

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state. Not in the least. The party is the guiding force in the state." This was his position at the 14th Congress. But is not guiding having a correct policy and winning people for it?

By 1927, at the 15th Congress, he was complaining about "administrative methods in the party in replacing the methods of persuasion". (*Works*, Vol. 10, p. 340.) The activity of the party had to be raised to "draw them [the party members] into the decision of questions concerning our party leadership, systematically implant inner-party democracy".

By the 16th Congress, 1930, he was referring to the sabotage of Soviet government measures by bureaucratic elements in the state apparatus "who are agents of our class enemies". He also spoke of Communist bureaucracy and the substitution of bureaucratic orders and decrees for the "creative initiative and independent activity of the vast masses of the working class and peasantry", while stating that "measures of repression in the sphere of socialist construction are a necessary element of the offensive, but they are an auxiliary, not the chief element". (*Works*, Vol. 12, p. 318.)

In the struggle against bureaucracy he concluded "the party is working along four main lines: that of developing *self-criticism*, that of organising the *checking of fulfilment* (of decisions), that of *purging* the apparatus, and, lastly, that of *promoting* from below to posts in the apparatus devoted workers from those of working-class origin" (pp. 337-8).

Do we see here the beginning of the subsequent problems? Real difficulties being wrestled with, but the growing identification of the problems with class enemies (of which there were many), the solution of the problems increasingly by repression (although always with the qualification that there should not only be repression), the organisational approach to the problems rather than the political (checking fulfilment, purging, promotion), although still speaking of the importance of criticism and self-criticism.

The Trade Unions

In the early debates on the trade unions in Lenin's time, Stalin supported Lenin. But it is questionable whether he really agreed with him, especially bearing in mind Lenin's conception of their vital independent role. "If the party falls out with the trade unions," said Lenin to the Second All-Russian Miners' Congress, "the fault lies with the party, and this spells certain doom for Soviet power." (*Works*, Vol. 32, p. 58.)

Nowhere in the whole period in Stalin's speeches and writings is there a properly worked-out presentation of the conception and role of the trade unions. His main treatment is in his *Concerning Questions of Leninism*. It is formal, with none of the creative thoughts of Lenin on this issue (in sharp contrast, by the way, with Stalin's understanding of the role of the unions in the labour movement in the capitalist world). In his various Congress reports his treatment is in a minor key, with the unions almost, as it were, dealt with in passing. Even in the key speeches *A Year of Great Change* and *Emulation and Labour Enthusiasm* they are not dealt with.

In the late twenties and in the period of the first Five-Year Plan, the shift in the attention of the unions from protecting the workers' interests to enforcing labour discipline and carrying out production targets was made. In May 1929, Tomsky, who had led the unions for a decade, stressing their independent role, was removed. He had stressed the narrowing of wage differentials, but he was also associated with the right-wing opposition. By the middle thirties there were repeated complaints of the neglect of working conditions by the unions, arbitrary action by officials, appointment instead of elections, and flagrant abuse of union rights. The role of the unions envisaged by Lenin had gone. At the 16th Party Congress in 1930, Stalin referred with satisfaction that the All-Union CC of the Trade Unions ". . . has got rid of the old, opportunist leadership".

Surely this virtual ignoring of Lenin on the trade unions is not accidental. The necessity for a central direction of the economy is not in question. The recreation of the working class as a force and the subsequent vast expansion in the number of raw recruits from the countryside created problems and it is foolish to think that this could have been done without strict labour discipline. But this is different from the conception of making the unions a mere adjunct of the state or the party. If Lenin's conception of the unions had been worked out and applied, the position would have been much more democratic and the creative role of the masses greater.

Socialist Legality

Similarly there was no real treatment of Lenin's point about socialist legality and the powers of the state security organs. In Stalin's *Interview with the Foreign Workers' Delegations*, November 5, 1927 (see *Works*, Vol. 10), he had been asked particularly about the judicial powers of the GPU, trials without witnesses, without counsel, secret courts, etc. He replied by dealing with the tense situation, making a general defence but avoiding the detailed points of principle raised. He added that from the point of view of the internal situation, it was so firm that "we could manage without the GPU" (p. 242), but the internal

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enemies were connected with imperialism abroad by a thousand threads, which was no doubt true.

My argument, therefore, is that the basis was laid in these years for the further bitter and tragic period. In the battle against the opposition the party became increasingly centralised. While there was stress on criticism, it was always the qualification that criticism had to be within strict limits. It was clear that the party became more and more administrative, political forms of leadership became less and less. The role of the unions, which could have been a vital force, was confined to that of a transmission belt of the party. The state apparatus, while progress was made, was still riddled with bureaucracy. Democracy, while developing in some ways, did not give real opportunity to the creative role of the masses. And, as we are told in the CPSU resolution, with the growth of the war danger, further inroads into democracy were made, with increased power being given to the security organs.

By the 17th Congress in 1934 there was a big change in Stalin's presentation of the opposition. "At this Congress, however," he said, "there is nothing more to prove, and, it seems, no one to fight. Everyone now sees that the line of the party has triumphed." (*Leninism*, Allen and Unwin, p. 516.) And he referred to the danger of "more deviations" and the "favourable soil" which existed for the revival of the ideology of the defeated anti-Leninist groups. But, he went on, we cannot say the fight is ended. He proceeded to dilate on:

> "Bureaucracy and red tape in the administrative apparatus; idle chatter about 'leadership in general' instead of real and concrete leadership; the functional structure of our organisations and lack of individual responsibility; lack of personal responsibility in work, and wage equalisation; the absence of a systematic check upon the fulfilment of decisions; fear of self-criticism—these are the sources of our difficulties; this is where our difficulties are now lodged" (p. 529).

In a sense this is proof of the criticism and analysis of the Central Committee resolution. The problems and difficulties were seen as possible new deviations and there was a tacit admission that self-criticism was not working. It is an admission that Stalin had, in effect, turned the party into an administrative machine, arguing that the solution lay principally in the sphere of organisation and administration and the combating of deviations.

Yet this was a period of enormous socialist advance and social change. By 1934 the Soviet Union had become an industrialised country.

Creative Marxism Stultified

One of the most serious aspects of the Stalin period was the stultification of creative Marxism. History, as could be expected, suffered most. Philosophy, the sciences, culture and jurisprudence were all affected. Mikoyan at the 20th Congress made far-reaching criticisms in this respect. The Congress gave a great new impetus to the development of creative Marxism in the whole international Communist movement.

Until, however, there is serious Marxist treatment by Soviet historians of the whole Stalin period, which they are eminently qualified to do, any worthwhile treatment of the 20th Congress must suffer almost crippling handicaps.

Indeed, Mikoyan said as much in his speech, remarking:

> "If our *historians* would make a real and profound study of the facts and events in the history of our party during the Soviet period, including those treated in the *Short Course*, if they made thorough use of the archives and historical documents, and not only newspaper files, then they would now be in a better position from the standpoint of Leninism, to shed light on many of the facts and events set out in the *Short Course*. . . . Is it normal that, nearly forty years after the October Revolution, we have neither a brief nor complete Marxist-Leninist textbook on the history of the October Revolution and the Soviet state, in which, without any colouring, there would be shown not only the façade but the life of the Soviet homeland in all its multiformity? Imagine the tremendous theoretical and political importance of a textbook that would shed full light on the rise and development of the first socialist state in the world. . . . Scientific work in the sphere of the history of the party and of Soviet society is, perhaps, the most backward sector of our ideological work." (*Soviet News Booklet*, No. 8, February 16, 1956.)

One could well echo: why has this not been done? The reason cannot only rest with the Soviet historians.

THE MASS REPRESSIONS

By the 18th Congress in 1939 after still more momentous economic and social progress the Soviet Union was already well into the era of what the resolution describes as mass repression and crimes.

Stalin's Report (see *The Land of Soviets Today and Tomorrow*, Moscow, 1938) dealt with the mass purges in the party which had resulted in "grave mistakes", on which he did not dilate. But there was no real analysis of party or state development in general. He claimed that the party was closer to the lower bodies. There was the now familiar organisational approach to the promotion of cadres. Party training was now based on

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Stalin's schematic *Short History* (published in September 1938), with its emphasis on a host of "deviations". The method of study circles was abolished; training had only to be done centrally through the press and lectures.

Yet this was the period of the mass repressions disclosed by the 20th Congress which shook the whole world Communist movement.

How far did they go? We do not know. Only the CPSU itself can disclose the real extent and increasingly history demands that this be done. Marxism requires the truth. Absence of it leaves the field wide open to the enemies of the Soviet Union. But the resolution itself refers to *mass* repressions. The French Communist historian, Jean Elleinstein, writes:

> "The exact balance sheet of the repression remains to be drawn up. The arrests were numerous and extended to the families of victims . . . it is impossible in the present state of historical research to give exact figures: what is certain is that we are dealing with mass repression. The information published in the Soviet Union is very fragmentary. As for the accounts published in the US, in France, or in other capitalist countries, they are very prejudiced. . . . The forced labour camps, few in number until 1930, developed under the circumstances of the collectivisation of land, as is recognised in the secret circular of May 8, 1933, signed by Stalin and Molotov and found in the Smolensk archive. The number of deportees increased considerably with the mass repressions of the years 1937-39 and without any doubt accounted for several million people." (*Histoire de l'URSS*, Vol. 2, Paris, 1973, pp. 224-5.)

Khrushchov's so-called secret report to the Congress was a courageous act. But it was fragmentary and discursive with little analysis. The facts disclosed are almost certainly correct, but there are few of them. But the report did contain important letters from the victims to Stalin, unearthed after Beria's arrest, which throw vivid and tragic light on the period.

Of the 139 members and candidates elected to the Central Committee at the 17th Congress, 98 were arrested and shot. Of the 1,966 delegates, 1,108, the majority, were subsequently arrested and accused of anti-revolutionary crimes. Khrushchov referred to a continuing review of the suspect cases and the fact that from 1954 to 1956 the military collegium of the Supreme Court had rehabilitated 7,697 persons, many of them posthumously. These included such outstanding Bolsheviks as Kossior, Rudzutak, Postyshev, Kosaryev and Chubar. He referred to the mass deportation of the smaller nationalities in the Caucasus to other parts of the Soviet Union. He also referred to the position after the war and the now notorious "Leningrad affair", in which Voznesensky (Chief of Economic Planning), Kuznetzov, Rodionov, Popkov and others lost their lives.

Curiously, the arrest and execution of Marshal Tukhachevsky is not dealt with. At the 22nd Congress, however, Khrushchov said that he was cleared and gave support to the report that the Nazi secret service had planted forged "evidence" of Tukhachevsky's alleged connections with the German High Command on President Benes, who in turn passed it on to Stalin. Detailed evidence is given of torture to extract confession. Stalin justified this by saying, which was true, that capitalist states used such measures.

On the other hand Khrushchov's portrayal of Stalin's conduct of the war, apart from his ignoring of the date of the actual Nazi attack, is suspect. Whatever mistakes were made, all available evidence shows that Stalin played an important, positive part in the general conduct of the war and its overall strategy. Stalin's speeches at the outbreak of the war after his initial silence and hesitation were brilliant in their approach and analysis. His appearance at the defiant November 7 Parade in the Red Square, when the Nazis were at the very gates of Moscow, had a great effect.

The weapon of the repression in the first instance was turned against the party and the leadership of the army, which gravely weakened the country at the outbreak of the war.

Roy Medvedev (*Let History Judge*, Macmillan, 1971), quoting official Soviet sources, gives a detailed list of 500 key personnel in the armed forces, government departments and vital industries who were executed. He also quotes Z. T. Serdiuk, who, in his speech at the 22nd Congress, said that Stalin personally initialled some 44,000 death sentences. Few parties ever suffered such a devastating blow. Some leaders of foreign Communist parties then resident in Moscow were among those who were struck down.

Though these details were not then publicly known, the 18th Congress, on the eve of the war, had in a distorted way reflected disquiet in the party and in the country. This was shown in Zhdanov's speech on the amendments to party rules. Zhdanov spoke of party comrades deprived of their rights and hounded because of self-criticism, so much so that people stopped sending complaints to the Central Committee. It was decided that mass purges should be abolished. He referred to the "objectionable feature" of mass purges, as they assumed the nature of a campaign. But everything was turned on its head. The unwarranted expulsions, he explained, were the work of double dealers who did not purge the

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party of the real wreckers. Expulsion of so-called passive elements resulted in honest, devoted people being classified as wreckers.

There was reference to case after case of people wrongly branded as class enemies, to the practice that every Communist must discover enemies, and so on, to the "fashionable formula" of "connected with the enemies of the people". The case was even quoted of one member resorting to a psychiatrist to obtain a certificate. "Owing to the state of health and mind, Comrade (so-and-so), is not fit to be used as a tool of the class enemy." There was hilarity in the Congress at many of these points, but it was the concealment of tragedy.

How Could This Happen?

Why this tragedy occurred is a complex and difficult question to explain, as the facts, which only the Soviet comrades can supply, are not available. As for justification, there can be none, only condemnation.

In the extreme gravity of the fascist danger and impending war, limitations of democracy and increased powers for the security organs could be justified. The Hitler military offensive to launch the Second World War was accompanied by intensive subversion, espionage, sabotage and wrecking. Every country in Europe invaded by the Nazis was first softened up in this way. There is no reason to doubt the Hitler fascist encroachments into the Soviet Union in this respect.

It is also a fact that the security organs of any state constitute an element of state power which is least susceptible to popular control, and they can acquire an inner momentum of their own. One need only look at the recent revelations regarding the CIA, their numerous secret wars, the systematic overthrow of governments, including the Allende government, poisonings, assassinations and kidnappings and the bugging, mail interception and burglary of senators and congressmen. As for the British security organs, which are shrouded in complete secrecy, there is no popular control whatsoever. As these organs are there to protect capitalism, this is to be expected.

But the Soviet security organs were founded to protect socialism. For these organs to get such a position of arbitrary and lawless power under Stalin can only be explained by the fact that the sole force, the party, which could have prevented these mass excesses or eliminated them at an early stage and brought the position under control, was not operating as it should. The facility of the party to exercise this control had not only been gravely undermined by the way Stalin and his close associates had constricted the development of the party, the state, the unions, and popular initiative and control. The illegal actions of Stalin and the security organs involved far more people than those immediately concerned in their direction. Considerable sections of the party, its leading organs and cadres were involved in every republic and region. The only body (the party) potentially capable of combating the illegalities was increasingly misused to propagate and stoke up the campaign in an atmosphere where nobody could be sure of what would happen next. There seems little doubt that a major factor in this was that the system of democratic checks on the security services envisaged by Lenin was never, in the event, effectively applied or developed.

What happened was also partly due to the fact that Stalin, who enjoyed much prestige, publicly endorsed the campaign of illegalities.

Element of Degeneration

Soviet democracy had to develop, but Stalin's régime held back this development, distorted it, retarded it, and even partially reversed it.

In his perceptive first analysis of these phenomena, "The Problems of Socialist Democracy" (*Nuovi Argomenti,* May-June 1956), Togliatti wrote that the least arbitrary generalisation "is that which sees in the errors of Stalin the gradual superimposing of personal power over organs that were originally collective and democratic in nature, and, as a consequence of this, the accumulation of phenomena of bureaucratisation, the violation of legality, stagnation, and partially even degeneration in different points of the social organism". He maintains that a large part of the cadre of Soviet society had become sluggish, losing or diminishing their critical and creative capacity in thought and action.

It may well be that the Soviet security organs were infiltrated by imperialism. Such infiltration is a standard method work of security services. It may well be that Stalin suffered paranoic tendencies in the end.

But our major consideration must be the political one. In effect, Stalin had replaced the method of relying on the power of the masses and even on the power of the party by arbitrary rule alien to all Marxist precepts.

It is now established that the great mass of the victims were innocent, that the secret trials were rigged. This raises the question of the validity of the earlier public trials of the old Bolsheviks and their execution.

Apart from their political views, the crimes with which they were charged were based on their confessions. But these old Bolsheviks denied, despite severe cross-examination, any connection with foreign military intelligence agencies.

The alleged plot to overthrow the government, with which they were charged, was centred on the

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case that Tukhachevsky and the generals were to carry this out. As Tukhachevsky and the generals were subsequently cleared of these false charges and posthumously rehabilitated, this, probably the most important central feature of these trials, falls to the ground. Unless further proof to the contrary is produced, these old Bolsheviks can only be assumed to be innocent of the criminal charges.

Of course, we will hear again, as we heard then, that this tragic problem was the result of the nature of the Soviet system and the nature of the Soviet Communist Party. Far from these things arising out of the nature of the party and the Soviet system of democracy, they were a departure from them, a violation of their essential principles. They did tremendous harm, but did not and could not change the socialist and democratic basis of Soviet society.

Togliatti argues correctly that what he termed the element of degeneration was partial and serious, more at the top of the party and the state, restricting democratic life, initiative, thought and action in many spheres (technical, economic, culture, literature, etc.). But he added this did not mean "the destruction of those basic features of Soviet society from which springs its democratic and socialist character and which makes this society qualitatively superior to modern capitalist societies".

While the CPSU resolution talks about "grave harm" to the cause of the Communist and Soviet society, it argues that this "could not and did not change the nature of our social system" or change the nature of the socialist state. And here it quotes Togliatti approvingly. While declaring that what happened caused "serious harm to the development of socialist democracy and the promotion of the creative initiative of millions of people", it takes serious issue with Togliatti's point about "certain forms of degeneration".

It is interesting to note here that Malenkov, at the 19th Congress, after the war, dealt at length with what he called shortcomings in the party. He pointed to a "certain danger" of party bodies becoming severed from the masses, of changing from organs of political leadership to managing institutions, administrative methods of leadership which "dampen the activity and initiative of the masses". He said "that party political work was not abreast of the demands of actual life", that there were plenty of undesirable "and at times even morbid features in their internal life"; that restriction of criticism killed initiative and undermined the prestige of the party, and that when criticism was suppressed "such ugly features as bureaucracy and degeneration and even the corruption of individual sections of the party apparatus invariably appear". (See *Report to 19th Congress, Moscow*, pp. 111-14.)

Not Inevitable

Some might argue that the harsh methods of socialist industrialisation and forced collectivisation were inevitable in the historical circumstances then prevailing. I do not think that argument can be accepted. The economic side of the matter cannot be separated from the political side.

For example, if the trade unions had been accorded the full creative role envisaged by Lenin, the process of industrialisation could well have proceeded in a different manner and atmosphere, even if in accordance with a central plan, one which would have encouraged mass initiative and democratic participation to the full. Far from limiting the pace of development, this might well have assisted it, and helped to avoid some of the many mistakes which were made. The end result could only have been more positive.

Collectivisation could never have been accomplished without massive problems. But the excesses of the forced collectivisation, admitted by Stalin although he avoided accepting his responsibility for them, could have been prevented, with a less tense situation in the countryside, less resistance and slaughter of livestock and consequential serious problems in agriculture.

The point here is that the resultant social and political structure, the growth of the system's institutions, would have been qualitatively different, as would the development of socialist democracy.

Perhaps the most serious aspect of the system of mass repression, apart from the human tragedy involved, was that it thwarted this development, delayed it by many years, and made it slow and difficult.

In view of all this the achievements of Soviet society are all the more remarkable, leading to the development of the great world socialist power which the Soviet Union is today.

While the creative activity of the masses was indeed restricted, these achievements could never have been won without the activity of the masses and the leadership of the party. If there was excessive central direction, the tremendous aims set could never have been realised without the mass of the people supporting these aims and believing in them, and working unsparingly to carry them out. It was also the period of Stakhanovism and other initiatives. As the resolution observes, the outstanding victories of socialism did not come by themselves, "they were achieved by the tremendous organisational and educational work of the party and its local organisations".

The resolution states that there was a fight against the "negative phenomena" even under

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Stalin. It further declares that there were periods, especially during the war, when Stalin's individual actions were sharply restricted, when members of the Central Committee took charge of fronts with independent decisions.

The situation partially revealed by Malenkov at the 19th Congress had to be resolved for the further creative development of Soviet society and Soviet democracy. The difficulty of doing so before Stalin's death was obvious because of the mass repressions and the prestige he enjoyed as a result of the victory in the Second World War. After Stalin's death the battle was immediately taken up by those in the Central Committee who saw the need for change. This was a vital turning point for Soviet society. It was a bitter battle and took a number of years to resolve.

The important thing to note is that Soviet society and the CPSU had the essential inner strength to begin to effect this tremendous change without widespread social disorder in the USSR, whatever the effects elsewhere.

This was due not only to the tremendous basic successes of Soviet society but to the widespread mass support of the Soviet people for it.

This had already been demonstrated in the war, where the people showed in selfless struggle and sacrifice their determination to protect their new social order from fascism. It was this mass support by the people for the Soviet system and the CPSU which enabled the essential changes to be started. True, the forces of development in Soviet society were poised for these changes, but it was the 20th Congress which initiated them.

THE BATTLE AFTER THE CONGRESS

The 20th Congress had embarked on the road to change. A considerable battle, however, lay ahead. The denunciation of the cult was harsh and forthright in the private session, from which all foreign fraternal delegates were excluded. The public session of the Congress had dealt with the matter only in general terms. It seemed that the intention was to keep the denunciation private and to proceed to change gradually. This proved impossible. A political battle was going on in the party leadership. The public resolution on the cult was adopted, not at the Congress, but at the Central Committee of June 1956, after Communist parties everywhere, on completely inadequate information, were reacting to the event.

Beria's apparatus of repression was demolished, the mass release of the innocent from unjust imprisonment which was started immediately after Stalin's death proceeded apace. The efforts to put things right were formalised in the reform of the Criminal Code in December 1958. This enacted that no trials or sentences could take place except by an approved court. So-called sentences by analogy (that is, for crimes not specified by law) were abolished, as was the term "enemies of the people". Deprivation of citizenship and banishment from the USSR were excluded as sentences. This is now done by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. The definition of "terrorist acts" was made precise, to include only murder of state leaders and representatives of foreign states.

That the political battle was severe and prolonged was highlighted by the July 1957 Plenum of the Central Committee which removed Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovitch, and others, as an "anti-party group".

Molotov and his supporters opposed all the main propositions of the Congress, especially those ending the consequences of the cult, restoration of legality, Soviet democracy, the possibility of the prevention of world war and the politics of peaceful coexistence, and different roads to socialism. They sought changes in party leadership to ensure this. Molotov was defeated. The Presidium was changed, but in the opposite direction to that desired by Molotov. Only six of the old Presidium were left and new leaders were elected from the candidate members, including Brezhnev. Kosygin became a Deputy Prime Minister in September. It is worth noting here that the Chinese Communist Party supported these changes.

When the 21st Extraordinary Congress was convened in January-February 1959, the main business was the adoption of the Seven-Year Plan with sweeping aims to establish a material and technical base which would allow a decisive step towards Communism. An 80 per cent increase in gross industrial output was envisaged for the seven years and, while emphasis was laid on heavy industry, an increase in real standards of 40 per cent was also endorsed.

While the decisions of the 1957 Plenum of the Central Committee were endorsed, there was little further reference to the Molotov group. In fairly general terms, Khrushchov's report dealt with the development of Soviet democracy, the activity and initiative of the masses, extension of the functions of the local bodies in matters of state importance, raising the importance of the organisational and educational role of the party and the socialist state. He called for an all-out strengthening of the alliance between the workers and the peasants and the friendship of the different national republics. (See *Decisions of the 21st Extraordinary Congress*, Moscow, 1959.)

The continuing ambivalence towards the socialist countries was seen in the treatment of Yugoslavia, with whom cordial relations had been

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restored after the Cominform break (see later). It was again denounced as "revisionist".

The Battle Continues

The fact that the 22nd Congress two years later in 1961 returned to the question of Molotov's opposition showed that the battle was still raging even after the group's expulsion. A further detailed vitriolic denunciation of Molotov and his supporters was made by Khrushchov. The implementation of the 20th Congress decisions, he reported, had had to be fought for in the midst of fierce resistance and this stand "was no accident for they are personally responsible for many instances of the wholesale repression". When the leadership had proceeded to rectify errors, he went on, Molotov and his supporters went over to open attack to reverse this and had demanded an extraordinary meeting of the Presidium. Marshal Zhukov was also attacked for attempting to "dissociate the armed forces from the party and oppose the Soviet army to the party leadership".

Khrushchov's report (see *The Road to Communism: The Proceedings of the 22nd Congress,* Moscow, 1961), and especially his reply, publicly confirmed much that had been in the private report to the 20th Congress.

Apart from dealing with the Seven-Year Plan, he summed up the progress made in developing party life. He roundly claimed that: "The period of the cult of the individual is now a thing of the past." From the point of view of the restoration of legality, the ending of the system of mass repression, this was undoubtedly true and an immense step forward.

But the further development of democracy was proving no easy task. What was beyond dispute was that the regular convening of party Congresses and plenary meetings of the Central Committee was now thoroughly established. On the promotion of inner-party democracy, he reported that it was progressing, but gave no details. He did say, however, that the role of local party organisations had been "enhanced", that there was a regular flow of information from the centre and called for greater mass political work by the party. Recording that two and a half million new members had been enrolled, he also disclosed the expulsion of 200,000—a reflection of the political struggle in the party.

There were now two million deputies in the Soviets throughout the country, he said, and a further two million people were serving on a voluntary basis on standing committees. He stressed the importance of the trade unions and their increasing role as a school for education, administration and management. Concern of the unions for the working man, as he put it, was a prime duty of the unions; they had to be drawn more widely into economic management with more voluntary workers and less reliance on paid officials.

So there was progress, but, as subsequent events showed, not enough, and Khrushchov's own leadership methods came into question.

A new party programme was adopted, which for our purposes it is not necessary to analyse here. An important departure in it, however, was the conception of the development of the dictatorship of the proletariat into a state of the whole people. With the construction of socialism, the full development of the peasantry in socialism, full and equal voting rights for all, and so on, the party, the programme declared, "transformed the state of the proletarian dictatorship into a state of the whole people . . . for the first time in history a state has taken shape which is not the dictatorship of any one class, but an instrument of society as a whole, of the entire people" (p. 251). This was a pronouncement which was to incur the wrath of the Chinese Communist Party in its subsequent attack on the CPSU as "revisionist".

But old ideas lingered on. For example, the 22nd Congress resolution, referring to the results of the 1957 and 1960 Conferences of the world Communist movement (see below) stated: "The CPSU regards it as its internationalist duty to strengthen in every way the monolithic character of the international Communist movement. . . ." This wrong concept was decisively rejected in the 1969 World Conference.

DEVELOPMENTS AFTER KHRUSHCHOV

The 23rd Congress five years later marked a further stage. Two years before, in 1964, Togliatti published his famous Yalta Memorandum reflecting on the political developments taking place and differences yet remaining. It is interesting that this was published in full in *Pravda.* (For the Yalta Memorandum see *Comment,* September 26, 1964.)

Togliatti thought that the 1960 World Conference of the Communist Parties was not correct in referring to the socialist countries in such a way as if everything was going well. On the contrary, he wrote, "difficulties, contradictions and new problems which must be presented in their effective reality continually arise in all the socialist countries". There was a lack of knowledge of the actual situation in each socialist country. "In many cases," he continued, "one has the impression that there are differences of opinion among the leading groups, but one does not know if this is really so or what the differences are. Perhaps it would be useful in some cases if the socialist countries conducted open debates on current problems in which the leaders also took part."

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However, what demanded greater attention was "overcoming the régime of restrictions and suppression of democratic and personal freedom introduced by Stalin". There was slowness and resistance, he found, which was difficult to explain as there was no longer capitalist encirclement of the Soviet Union. His starting point, he underlined, was that socialism always meant the widest freedom for the workers and that they participate in an organised manner in the direction of the entire social life. And he continued: "Therefore, we greet all positions of principle and all facts showing that this is the case in all the socialist countries and not only in the Soviet Union. On the other hand, events that sometimes disclose the contrary to us damage the entire movement."

By the time of the 23rd Congress, 1966, Khrushchov had been replaced by Brezhnev as General Secretary. Considerable progress had been recorded on foreign policy, although reference was made to Khrushchov's "subjective" errors in this respect. Brezhnev still advanced the aim of creating the material and technical basis for the advance to Communism (see *23rd Congress of the CPSU*, Moscow, 1966). Between 1959 and 1965 the national income had gone up by 53 per cent, but various important economic targets had not been reached, there was a slow-down in the growth rate and difficulties in agriculture. These Brezhnev largely attributed to Khrushchov. "Certain miscalculations were made and undue haste permitted as a result of a subjective approach." Kosygin in his report said that some of the previous Congress targets were "economically unjustifiable". So for 1966-70 lower targets were set, but even then the aim was an increase of 45-50 per cent in industrial production, 25 per cent in agricultural output and a 30 per cent growth in real per capita income. All this projected yet another great step forward in the Soviet economy.

Regarding Khrushchov's replacement, the only official reference in Brezhnev's report read:

> "An important stage in the life of our party was marked by the October (1964) Plenum of the Central Committee, CPSU, which expressed the firm determination of the party to develop and observe strictly Lenin's standards of party life and principles of leadership. Defects in the sphere of economic and party organisation, errors due to the unjustifiable reorganisation of party, government and economic bodies are being corrected on the basis of the decisions of the October Plenum."

Khrushchov's removal, for that is what it was, whatever the discussion in the Central Committee, was not preceded by any public discussion of the issues involved. It had, therefore, the appearance of a bolt from the blue. It is probably this division in the leadership that Togliatti had in mind in his Yalta Memorandum, written before the Plenum, and its publication in *Pravda* was a reflection of these differences.

Implementation of 20th Congress Line

Be that as it may, many parties in Europe, including our own, expressed concern, not only about the method of removing Khrushchov, but the possible implications of any reversal of the 20th Congress decisions.

Changes in leadership of a party are normal in any party even when no great crisis is involved. But even now in most socialist countries leadership changes take place with little explanation or even none.

Of course, the 23rd Congress made clear beyond any shadow of doubt that the general line of the 20th Congress was to be carried on and developed. Apart from considerations of age, it was gradually leaked that Khrushchov had exacerbated relations with China, took single-handed decisions on foreign affairs, on economic and government reorganisation, and so on. The latter problems were subsequently fairly widely discussed and differences disclosed.

Whatever Khrushchov's individual errors, Communists will always remember the historic role he played in the 20th Congress.

The central difference, it was said, was individual decision-making, or relapse from real collective leadership.

The 23rd Congress, after confirming the general lines of consistent struggle for peace, dealt with this, saying that party committees "must be in constant contact, regularly visit primary organs". Referring to Khrushchov's methods, Brezhnev called for the "further consolidation of the principles of collective leadership at the centre and at all levels, in enhancing the role of the plenary meetings of the Central Committee and local party bodies, in showing full confidence in the membership and in improving inner-party information". Greater attention, he said, had to be paid to the opinions and proposals of Communists, to "create conditions for extensive criticism and self-criticism so that party organisations can at any moment correct any Communist who has deviated from the party rules and prevent aggravation of faults in the work". A reference was made to the need that may arise between Congresses "to discuss the more important political problems at representative party forums broader than the Plenary meetings of the CC CPSU". So the decision was taken that the party may convene all-union party conferences as in Lenin's day.

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Still Much To Be Done

So it will be noted that ten years after the 20th Congress progress had been made, but much still required to be done. The whole method of leadership was still very much centralised.

On the Soviets, Brezhnev said, improvement lay along the lines of their "further democratisation". Locally they had to be given a larger measure of independence in dealing with economic, financial and land questions and in guiding local industries. The standing committees of the Soviets had to become more active and "reporting to sessions of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR must become an established practice of the USSR Council of Ministers".

So progress was reported, but still more was necessary. The complex issue of the relation of the party and state was still not satisfactorily solved as the remark "party bodies must completely eliminate their petty tutelage of government bodies . . ." showed.

On the trade unions, whose membership had now grown to 80 million, emphasis was laid on their role in fulfilling the state plan, technical innovation and their responsibility for the "political education of the working people, problems of improving the organisation and remuneration of labour", training for higher skills and safety and health.

What was the position five years later at the 24th Congress in 1971? Despite the tense situation arising from the intervention in Czechoslovakia, that Congress will, above all, be noted for the bold programme for world peace which it advanced.

In the main the 23rd Congress Five-Year Plan had been achieved. By 1970 the national income was up 47 per cent over 1965, industrial production up 50 per cent, the increase in living standards was 33 per cent instead of the planned 30 per cent. The ninth Five-Year Plan set yet again sweeping aims with industrial production to go up 41 to 45 per cent and living standards another 30 per cent. This was to be "another major step forward in building the material and technical base of Communism". Workers now comprised more than half the population and more than half of them now had higher or secondary education.

With 14½ million members, said Brezhnev, the party now accounted for 9 per cent of the population and there has been a "further development" of inner-party democracy and Leninist norms.

Regular plenary sessions of the Central Committee took place quarterly (16 in four years), and the Politburo met once a week. He referred to lively conferences and congresses in the regions and localities, and said that the CC regularly informed the local party organs, the active and all Communists, of the key problems of the party's work and the situation in and outside the country. (See *24th Congress of the CPSU*, Moscow, 1971.)

Criticism and self-criticism had been "further developed" and most party committees were "more attentive" to criticism. But, Brezhnev went on:

> "at the same time it must be emphasised that not all party organisations and their leading organs have drawn the proper conclusions from the instructions of the 23rd Congress on this question. Some leaders lack restraint and tact, the ability to hear critical remarks out attentively and correctly react to criticism."

Regarding the Soviets, which now had two million deputies and 25 million activists, the task "has been and remains the further development of socialist democracy". Powers of local Soviets had been extended "within limits of their competence" to cover the work of factory and economic organisations in their territories. The deputies "now meet more regularly with their electorate" and give an account of their work. Greater control, it was stated, was exercised by the Supreme Soviet over the work of ministries and departments, and over the state of affairs in key sectors of economic and cultural development. A specific law defining the status, power and right of deputies and duties of officials who work with them was being worked out.

For the unions, now with 93 million members, it was stated that "the safeguarding of the legitimate interests of the working people remains one of the basic tasks of the trade unions"—including questions of overtime, labour, safety, days off, etc. It was said that the unions were "one of the key links in the general system of socialist democracy, in drawing the working people into the administration of the affairs of the state and society"—from drawing up state plans to the managing of each enterprise, important work in production, social work and personnel. He appealed for proper party work in the unions "without assuming petty tutelage over the trade unions". His general conclusion was:

> "We see the meaning and content of socialist democracy in the increasingly broader participation of the masses in the administration of state and social affairs . . . the party's constant concern is that our socialist democracy should steadily develop and that every person should feel he is a citizen in the full sense of the word, a citizen interested in the cause of the entire nation and bearing his share of the responsibility. The party will go on consistently implementing this very line."

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FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

Brezhnev here is presenting the development of socialist democracy as a continuing process ("steadily develop"). To a Marxist this is the only logical view, as socialist society is itself a continually developing organism with new problems emerging in each new stage, with the old still inter-acting with the new. The line of development is not automatic, it has to be discussed and solved in debate, the possibility of making mistakes is always there.

Soviet society, now highly complex with an advanced economy and science, has in these 20 years got beyond the realm of putting right the cult into the realm of positive development. Naturally, it is the Soviet Party, government and peoples who will decide on these matters. It is a process of intense interest, however, to every friend of the Soviet Union and of vital concern to all. It is all the more important in view of the fantastic economic and social development, and the fact that the Soviet Union is such a great factor for peace and national liberation.

What is involved here is the state of public life. This by its very social basis must be different from the class politics and democracy of socially divided capitalism. The participation of the masses in decision-making in capitalism is severely limited in the formal state sense. It is not for nothing that the official description of our political system is "Cabinet Government" on behalf of capitalism. The inner workings of the Cabinet, the decision-making centre, are shrouded in official secrecy. This is the position with Labour governments, too. The Labour leaders have accepted the bourgeois convention that the Labour Cabinet is not answerable to the Labour Party Conference, and we have the present *de facto* coalition situation with the government ruling with tacit Tory and big-business support against the labour movement. The recent legal action of the government over the Crossman diaries show how far it is prepared to go to preserve Cabinet secrecy.

But equally, the mass political extra-Parliamentary struggle can alter decision-making and can be a profound factor on the Cabinet, Parliament and the courts, as the battle over the Industrial Relations Act shows. The role of the British people in decision-making in our class-divided society is primarily by conflict and struggle, and not by formal participation.

Any serious Marxist discussion on political life in a society which has resulted in the abolition of mutually antagonistic classes and become socially homogeneous presupposes that public political life develops along different lines.

Surveying the scene, the increasing role of the Soviets, the unions, the mass organisations and the party, socialist legality, important advances have resulted from the 20th Congress.

This growth of direct participatory democracy is only possible with the basic premise of the society, socialist ownership of the means of production. This stands in sharp contrast to the battle now developing in Britain and elsewhere, a battle which shows how monopoly ownership distorts and limits democracy in bourgeois society, and which aims at measures of industrial democracy and elements of workers' control.

The momentum of change after the 20th Congress has not been constant. Within the general advance, there has also been at times a certain slowing down or even regression. Lenin has observed that there cannot be democracy without full information. The fullest development of democracy requires mass participation in formulating policy and carrying it out. A precondition is the utmost democracy in the party. It involves the possibility to express in discussion the varied opinions, differing estimates, solutions and dissenting views.

Involvement of the Masses

It is many-sided and also involves the non-party masses, the great majority of the population, and the public mass organisations, especially the trade unions, as well as the party. The leading role of the party does not mean that the masses have no role. On the contrary, the party cannot fulfil its leading role without the active democratic participation of the masses in public life.

To involve the masses, this democratic process must receive public expression, for how otherwise can it be fully effective?

It appears to me that the still greater involvement of the mass of the people, as I have said, in the process of decision-making, is the major issue.

The main line of development would appear to be in the inter-play of central state direction and the fullest democratic expression and the further participation of the Soviet people, through their organisations and public life in decision-making and formation of policy, as well as administration. Of course, at present, there is nation-wide discussion of draft laws, the economic plan and other decisive matters. There has been and will be wide discussion of forms of economic administration, decentralisation and social questions. There is an enormous specialised Soviet periodical press covering almost all aspects of public life.

From the point of view of institutional structure, the Party Congress, now meeting regularly once in five years, can only decide on the broadest sweep of policy-making. Here it would appear greater discussion of the main issues by the Congress would be involved. The effective shorter-term

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development of policy is obviously the province of the quarterly Central Committee and the weekly Political Bureau. In a party sense, therefore, further development involves a still greater interplay from the base to the centre.

Leadership, amongst other things, involves the choice of options in given situations and on problems, often very serious. Marxists can disagree and make differing estimates. Without doubt, in the Soviet leadership, as in many others, this takes place and decisions are arrived at by majority vote or consensus. It may well be that on more of these there could be public ventilation of these options as well as the general objective of policy. The successive changes in leadership, a normal feature of democratic life, whether resulting from policy, adequacy in the job or from age, at present take place, as we have said, with little or no public explanation whatever the degree of explanation inside the party. One understands the premium placed by the party on its unity and that unity of purpose is essential, but it is difficult to visualise that the present method can continue indefinitely. There is no doubt that a more public method on these questions would deepen the content of Soviet political life in view of the very high degree of education and political understanding of the Soviet people.

Party, Mass Organisations, State

A greater critical examination could well produce proposals or amendments on policy not foreseen in original party proposals. And to the degree the mass non-party bodies, and in particular the unions, further develop their democratic life, they could play an increasing role in the initiation of policy both within the party and the government.

Reference has already been made to the regular reporting of Ministers to the Standing Committees, and so on, and the greater critical examination of proposed legislation and administration.

It will be interesting to see how development in these spheres is summed up and which new developments are proposed.

The fact that decrees on important issues are now frequently made in the name of the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers seems to be a constitutional precedent. As is known, Brezhnev, as General Secretary, plays a direct role in diplomatic negotiations and treaty making. But we seem to lack a worked-out theoretical treatment of this position and the relative functions of party and state. It may well be that this stage in the development of relations of party and state will undergo further change.

There are other aspects of the problem of great importance arising from the fact that socialist society, while homogeneous, has contradictions and conflicts of interests, although these are not of the classic class type which we know of in capitalist society. There can also be mistakes in planning and administration that can place the party and government in conflict with the masses or a section of the masses.

A case in point arose, for example, in Poland, where there were serious riots in 1970 as a result of deteriorating living standards, which led to government and party changes. Subsequently we learn that Gomulka, who played such a progressive role after the 20th Congress, himself fell prey to arbitrary methods of arriving at decisions and of leadership with strong elements of paternalism. This is the price which any socialist society may pay for any breakdown in its proper democratic function.

The Handling of Dissent

Another, different, example is from Czechoslovakia. The problem is presented by the handling of the ex-General Secretary of the Czechoslovak Party. It is not my intention to declare yet again on the events of August 1968 when Dubcek led a majority in the Central Committee. Dubcek, now expelled from the party, rightly or wrongly retains his original views, but at present has no public means of expressing them. A public rebuttal of his position, but without any meaningful documentation, is made by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia which is circularised in translation to foreign Communist parties. But foreign Communists are in the impossible position of getting to know a version of his views, which may or may not be correct, only from the capitalist press.

At a recent stage it appeared that administrative action was contemplated. We have stated more than once that political differences in socialist states should be handled by political and not administrative means. We had suggested that there should be an amnesty for those who were imprisoned in 1972 for expressing, in a way held to be illegal, political views different from those of the leading organs of the Czechloslovak Communist Party arising in the main from the events of 1968. In our public statement of May 13, 1975, we declared: "When these trials took place in 1972, we said then that the issue was not only the right to hold different views, but the legal means publicly to express them."

This view is rejected, so the problem in its present form goes on. It seems that the Czechoslovak authorities genuinely want no more trials. Yet a legal right of publication for differences within the framework of socialism is denied. If our suggested lines of solution are rejected, what is the solution?

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This is related to the question of the handling of dissent. The Soviet constitution guarantees the political rights and liberties of citizens. In this connection there arises the problem of dissent in Soviet society which is in itself an aspect of democracy. There are those who say there is no such problem in socialist societies, or, if there is, it arises out of the influence of imperialist ideas. It needs to be stressed that the attempt to interpret the Helsinki accords as ideological convergence or ideological "disarmament" is nonsense. The clash of ideas is a reflection of the objective reality of the existence of two different social systems on a world scale and the class struggle which is the product of class division and exploitation in capitalism. The dominant ideological and social presentation in capitalist society is actively weighted in the interests of preserving capitalism. Detente in the sphere of official policy and peaceful coexistence replacing war as a means of solving differences does not alter these facts.

Dissent can arise from a number of factors of which the influence of imperialist ideas is one. As Lenin has observed, ideas can linger on in a socialist society long after the objective social factors which gave rise to them cease to exist.

But differences can arise which are not the result of imperialist ideas, and dissent can mean different things. There are those who support change within the framework of socialism and the Soviet system. There are those who used to support, but, as victims of the repression, have subsequently gone over to the opposition completely. Then there are those who oppose the system as a whole. To label them all as dissenters, to refuse them any legal means of expression, can make previous supporters sour. Expression of disagreement is not just a safety valve. Unless differences of views on development of socialism receive expression, ideas can become ossified. The most effective way Marxism can justify itself is to persuade people by discussion and conviction.

There is the special case of the Jewish people who in the USSR play such a large part in public life. The October Revolution ended the virulent Tsarist anti-Semitism and pogroms. The USSR played a leading role in the founding of the State of Israel. A separate autonomous Jewish republic exists in the USSR. The problem as it exists today affects only a minority of the large Jewish population of the country. Its roots lie in a combination of factors: the crimes committed by Stalin against Jewish leaders in the past as amongst so many other sections of the Soviet people, the terrible effect on Jewish people of Hitler's extermination policy, and a heightened interest in the state of Israel. There are remnants of anti-Semitism, despite its official condemnation, and there is reason for concern that those who are guilty appear not to be charged in accordance with Soviet law. There is the added complication of Israel's ruthless, aggressive wars against the Arab states and the effect on Jews of rather crude propaganda which fails to distinguish between Zionism as a reactionary political ideology and the Jewish religion.

The Soviet Union allows increasing numbers of those who wish to emigrate to Israel to do so, although harassment of those wishing to go, whoever was responsible, has not helped, and there now exists the reverse problem of those, disillusioned in Israel, who want to return.

Questions of Culture

Greater attention is given to fostering the arts in the Soviet Union than in any other society. In the sphere of music the country has made an outstanding contribution to world culture. The world-renowned composer Shostakovitch was submitted to harsh official criticism in Stalin's time. Whether any or none of the criticism was justified, his Fifth Symphony is subtitled *A Soviet Artist's Response to Just Criticism*. But while informed criticism is part of the artist's life, should there be an official party or government obligatory line regarding musical form? It is the same with the graphic arts where the modern advanced schools (or reactionary, depending on one's views) seem to be officially discouraged. This in spite of the fact that such schools flourished in the period after the revolution. No art can live without being exhibited. Practice differs widely on this matter in the socialist countries. It is hoped that the two recent exhibitions of so-called non-conformist painting in the USSR represents a change in policy. This should apply to sculpture, too. One wonders how far this problem is exacerbated by the attitude of the official Union of Artists and Writers?

The greatest problem concerns the writer and the dramatist, bearing as it does, in so many cases, on social and political themes. In the capitalist West, the bulk of Soviet writing, much of great social and artistic merit, as C. P. Snow has observed, is ignored. The exclusive attention, for obvious political propaganda purposes, is on the so-called dissident writers. As to the artistic merit of their writing, this is the province of informed literary criticism. But it is when the social and political content of their work is considered that the problem arises, and, as all publishing facilities are socially owned, the state exercises effective as well as legal censorship. Here we come to the case of the trials of writers, e.g. Sinyavsky and Daniel, on which our party has expressed criticism.

After the 20th Congress there was an outburst

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of critical writing of novels and plays, some published (e.g. Dudintsev and Solzhenitsyn) and some not. When Khrushchov was General Secretary, several such plays and novels were published. Work was also published which in one way or another justified Stalin. After Khrushchov's removal less of the critical work was published. There was fierce controversy on this issue, as the *Novy Mir, Literary Gazette* and *Pravda* debates showed. At the 24th Congress Brezhnev condemned excesses on both sides. Soviet reality, he said, was more complex. The party would never reconcile itself to attempts to blunt ideology and besmirch Soviet society: "If a writer slanders Soviet reality and helps our ideological adversaries in their fight against socialism, he deserves only one thing, public scorn." A fair enough comment, indicative of the problem. But the public, in order to express scorn or praise, must be able to know the work in question.

The writers concerned were not just subjected to public scorn, they were tried and sentenced for their work, published abroad but not in the Soviet Union. They were found guilty of slandering the Soviet state under the clauses of the Criminal Code covering such matters. Whether this law should be used in such cases or should exist at all is open to question. Slander of individuals is quite another matter. If the writer cannot be published in the USSR and publication abroad is an offence, if the work is judged slanderous, or is published underground (the so-called *Samizdat*) and in this way also falls foul of the law, a vicious circle arises. It appears that there can be no solution along the line of prosecutions, which the Soviet authorities, increasingly, it seems, do not want. Can there be a wider scope in the sphere of published work, or as in Hungary a measure of self-publication?

Handling of Minority Views

The matter is further complicated when direct criticism of official policy arises without a legal means of expressing that criticism, as, for example, on Czechoslovakia. Considering that there were great differences on this issue between Communist parties and within Communist parties, it would have been amazing if there had been no criticism at all in the USSR. During the 1969 World Conference of the Communist Parties in Moscow, the Soviet press published fairly and accurately the views of those parties, including our own, which were critical of the events of August 1968. Soviet society had no difficulty in facing this. If the Soviet press published the views of Soviet citizens who also were critical, this would in no way rock Soviet society. Andropov in a recent speech (see *APN Bulletin,* June 10, 1975) said: "Any Soviet citizen whose interests coincide with those of society feels well all the broad scope of our democratic freedoms. It is a different matter when these interests in some particular cases fail to coincide. Here we flatly state—priority should be given to the interests of society as a whole, of the whole people, and we believe this principle to be absolutely fair." Priority, yes, but can it be fair to argue that those who have different views can hold them (that cannot be prevented), but cannot publicly express them?

The next stage in the problem is when some of the critics set themselves up as self-appointed defenders of "civil liberties" in the USSR, with Sakharov publicly and frequently making pronouncements to foreign reporters in Moscow. Others who are critical equally strongly disagree with this campaign.

When it comes to the political views of Sakharov and those who think like him, they are now extending to criticism of socialism in general and in particular against the policy of detente. For example, Nicholas Fraser in *The Times* (July 29, 1975), commenting on Sakharov's book *My Country and the World,* to be published shortly, wrote that he (Sakharov) "criticises the US and the Western world for their myopic selfishness" which, Sakharov said, made possible the "debacle" in Indo-China. What Sakharov refers to as the "tragedy" of Vietnam would, he says, have been prevented if the US had put pressure on the Soviet Union to prevent arms deliveries to the DRV. A monstrous view this. Vietnam's defeat of the US was a tremendous step in national liberation and freedom. Quoting Fraser further, Sakharov, he says, "deplores the West's apparent lack of confidence in its system" and supported Senator Jackson's wrecking amendment to the Trade Bill in connection with the Helsinki Conference.

The *Times* (Nov. 27, 1975) reported on an Open Letter to Sakharov from three Soviet "dissidents" who have settled in New York in which they said that Sakharov was naïve, took too idealistic a view of the West, overlooked its serious problems, and that an American worker would not recognise the description of America given by him.

Solzenitsyn's views have become so deeply anti-Soviet that on his recent tour of the US he refused to meet President Ford because of America's participation in the Helsinki Conference. But he found a common and congenial platform with George Meany, the notorious trade union boss who works against all the progressive and unitary trends in European trades unionism.

When Sakharov is awarded a Nobel prize, what is this but a cold war anti-Soviet act by the Nobel Committee of the Norwegian Parliament? The Swedish newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* found the

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decision "incomprehensible". *Dagens Nyheter* wrote that in the past few years the Nobel Committee had displayed not only gross opportunism but "such bad judgment that the Peace Prize had become seriously compromised". (See *The Times*, October 11, 1975.)

Our party has argued repeatedly that such views should be dealt with politically and not by legal actions, expulsions from the country, or confinement in psychiatric institutions. No Communist would have a second's difficulty, least of all the Soviet Communists, in rebutting such views as being wrong and against the interests of peace and detente. They would have no support whatever from the Soviet public, who more than any other people in the world have suffered from war. These critics would receive public scorn as they deserve.

Of course imperialism would exploit such views. They do so now. A different handling of this matter would be a sign of the strength of Soviet society which is now tackling much bigger and more important problems of socialist democratic development than the views of this minority. But the proper handling of minority views is itself a problem of democratic development.

INTERNATIONAL REPERCUSSIONS OF THE 20th CONGRESS

In considering the international repercussions of the 20th Congress, we have to examine not only the effects on the socialist states, but also on the international Communist movement. As was to be expected, imperialism received the revelations with glee and went to work to exploit them up to the hilt, specially in the East European countries. The capitalist powers fully expected the international Communist movement to fall apart. They never made a more serious miscalculation.

Seventh World Congress

To understand the position in the international Communist movement the starting point must be the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International of July-August 1935. It was held on the background of the sweeping advance of fascism and the imminent danger of world war, and the development of many parties into mass organisations deeply rooted among the people.

Dimitrov's historic report and the subsequent Congress decisions had a threefold significance. They reversed the sectarian period of the Comintern in which social-democrats were described as "social fascists" and they paved the way for the development of the popular front tactics against fascism and war, and for the independent development of the parties.

The policy of characterising social democracy as social-fascist and in practice refusing to differentiate between fascism and bourgeois democracy had disastrous political consequences for the parties in Western Europe and for the working class. Because of the economic crisis and the growing war danger, the parties in the course of struggle were realising the need for, and increasingly building, unity in France, Austria and Spain. In France this led eventually to the Popular Front victory in 1936 and in Spain to the popular unity in the war against Franco, and in the formation of the International Brigades.

In 1934 in preparation for the Congress, Dimitrov, himself a great anti-fascist fighter who found his freedom from the Hitler hangmen through his courageous defence in the Reichstag fire trial and international pressure, gave further impetus to these new developments in the movement. Dimitrov, in the preparatory commission for the Congress, sharply posed the need to abandon the concept of social fascism, called for practical steps to realise working class and trade union unity. When fully worked out in the 1935 Congress, these ideas turned all the parties to the tactic of the Popular Front.

It is interesting, too, that Dimitrov said that it was now impossible to give operative leadership from Moscow on all questions to the 65 sections of the Comintern "that exist in the most diverse conditions", that the CI should concentrate on fundamental problems and strengthen the work of the Communist parties on the spot "at the expense of the cumbersome bureaucratic apparatus of the ECCI".

There were acute divisions in the CI before this broad line was eventually adopted (see *"Documents of G. M. Dimitrov in Preparation for the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International", Marxism Today*, July 1972, and James Klugmann, *"Dimitrov and the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International", Marxism Today*, July-August 1972).

Russian as well as other members of the Commission were divided. It was impossible to say where Stalin stood at the outset of the discussion, but he thoroughly endorsed the position at the Congress, where he attended the opening session but did not speak.

Comintern Dissolved

With the Second World War, all practical contacts between the parties were broken. Each developed its own work in the war. And in 1943 the Comintern was dissolved. The statement (May 15, 1943) announcing this step declared that a common directing centre of the Communist parties was no longer useful, that, with the increasing complications in the internal and international relations of the various countries, "any

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sort of international centre would encounter insuperable obstacles in solving the problems facing the movement in each separate country".

Explaining why this was so, the statement referred to "the deep differences of the historic paths of development of various countries, the differences in their character and even contradictions in their social orders, the differences in the level and tempo of their economic and political development, finally, in the degree of consciousness and organisation of the workers".

After the Second World War

After the victory of the anti-fascist war there were two major developments in the international movement. Instead of only one socialist state, there was now a system of socialist states led by Communist parties. Vietnam and North Korea had been won for socialism in 1945, then the European socialist states were founded. In China in 1949 and much later in Cuba, the social revolution was victorious. The Communist parties had emerged as independent sovereign bodies, many with new prestige and mass membership, with no directing centre but united in general international solidarity. These developments brought difficulties in relations between socialist states, which was a new problem for socialist theory and practice, and between Communist parties.

Regarding the socialist states, there was the urgent need for mutual defence and economic co-operation against all the attempts of imperialism to turn the clock back and, in particular, against the Dulles "doctrine" of US imperialism to roll back socialism in Europe.

The socialist states were at different stages of social and economic development which required differing policies in each country. But the matter was grievously complicated for the East European socialist states before the 20th Congress. Stalin and those associated with him, introduced into these countries through the Soviet security organs, the same illegal methods of repression then prevailing in the Soviet Union. The Soviet "model" of economic development, with virtually the same errors, was imposed.

Cominform and Yugoslavia

In 1947 the short-lived Cominform was founded, which for a time grouped together the parties of the European socialist states and the two mass parties of France and Italy. Togliatti relates (*Nuovi Argomenti* article) that the Cominform did only two things (besides publish a journal). The first, which Togliatti thought was correct, was to orientate the whole workers' movement against the war plans of the imperialists. And the second, which he thought was bad, was the expulsion of the Yugoslavs from the Cominform. Apart from the initial meeting, he said, the Cominform never discussed Italian policy. The same presumably goes for the French CP. Both were making their own policies, as were the other parties, who were all outside the Cominform.

The clash with Yugoslavia arose out of Yugoslavia's assertion of its independent right to develop its socialism in its own way. The Yugoslav Communists were in a strong position because of their mass indigenous military struggle against fascism. But there was no Soviet military intervention against Tito. Our party, along with others, wrongly supported the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform. In other socialist countries, the struggle to assert individual lines of development went on. But in the trials in Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere, those accused, who were prominent leaders of their parties, were falsely charged with treason, in association with Yugoslavia and in connection with the Western powers. Many were jailed and others executed.

There were also great strains in relations between the Soviet Union and China. With the exposure at the 20th Congress there were eruptions in nearly all the East European countries except Yugoslavia, ranging from riots to attempted counter-revolution in Hungary, the country with the greatest fascist background. When Soviet military intervention, after much initial hesitation, to help the Hungarians took place, this was supported by China and nearly all Communist parties.

Effects of the 20th Congress

The degrees of repression, distortion of socialist democracy, the development of minor cult figures in the various countries, differed. In all of them, far-reaching changes in leadership and democratic method, to clean up the evil heritage of Stalin, were precipitated. Gomulka, released from prison, became First Secretary in Poland. Kadar, also released from prison, took the helm in Hungary. There were corresponding changes elsewhere. In the GDR, where there had been no trials or executions, change was more gradual. In Czechoslovakia the change really did not take place until 1968 and was checked by the military intervention of some of the Warsaw Pact countries, which intervention our party and others condemned, including parties of some socialist countries. The victims of the show trials, Rajk in Hungary, Kostov in Bulgaria, and others, were posthumously rehabilitated and those in prison released. Of the 14 accused in the Slansky trial all were rehabilitated by the Czechoslovak Supreme Court, but five of the main accused have not yet been rehabilitated by the party. It will be recalled that Husak himself was unjustly accused and jailed.

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The Soviet government declaration on relationships between socialist states on October 30, 1956, summed up the situation at the time as follows:

> "The emergence of the new [socialist] system and the deep growing revolutionary reconstruction of social relations involved no few difficulties, unsolved problems and outright mistakes, including such as were committed in the sphere of mutual relations between socialist countries."

Systematically, new agreements on economic co-operation and mutual aid were negotiated between the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, and between each other, reasserting the principles of sovereignty, independence and non-interference in internal affairs. Treaties were signed regulating the stationing of Soviet troops in the immediate postwar situation.

(This was before NATO and the Warsaw Treaty organisations were established. Soviet troops were in Poland and Hungary for supply-line purposes to their forces responsible for that part of occupied Germany which was to become the GDR. US, British and French troops occupied that part of Germany later to become the Federal Republic, and part of Berlin.)

The system of mixed companies in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and China was dissolved.

International Conference 1957

In this situation, which imperialism was exploiting to the full, in view of the deepening of the cold war, and the upsurge of national liberation, there was urgent need for international Communist solidarity.

The first coming together of the Communist parties in Moscow 1957 on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Russian revolution was unsatisfactory in an extremely important respect. An important declaration was adopted at a separate meeting of the parties of the then 12 socialist states including the Chinese and Albanian parties. The other parties were excluded. All 64 parties, however, met jointly to adopt an appeal for world peace.

This declaration (see *World News,* No. 49, 1957) surveyed the relations between the socialist states and the international struggle for peace and socialism.

It followed many of the lines of argument of the 20th Congress on the possibility of preventing world war and the policy of peaceful coexistence, and the possibility of advance to socialism without civil war. It added, however, that as long as imperialism existed there was ground for wars, and highlighted the colonial wars then being waged. It outlined the "mighty" forces which existed, and, if united, could prevent war.

On the possibilities of peaceful coexistence, "which had been further developed and brought up to date in the 20th Congress of the CPSU", the declaration added that this coincided with the five principles advanced jointly by the Chinese Republic and the Republic of India and the Bandung Conference.

It stressed the complete agreement of these 12 parties on the cardinal principles of the socialist revolution and socialist construction. It called for working-class unity and the co-operation of Communist and socialist parties. It stated that: "The socialist countries base their relations on principles of complete equality, respect for territorial integrity, state independence, sovereignty and non-interference in one another's affairs," while stressing mutual benefit and association.

Commenting that the international Communist movement had withstood many trials, it concluded that, instead of crisis:

> "the Communist movement is growing and gathering strength. The historic decisions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU are of tremendous importance not only to the CPSU and to the building of Communism in the USSR. They have opened a new stage in the world Communist movement and pushed ahead its further development along Marxist-Leninist lines. The results of the Congresses of the Communist Party of China, France, Italy and other countries in recent times have clearly demonstrated the unity and solidarity of the party ranks and their loyalty to the principles of proletarian internationalism."

This was broadly true, although over-optimistic in view of later developments. But the method was wrong. On behalf of our party we strongly protested against the parties of the socialist countries meeting separately and adopting this programmatic declaration and declared that there could not be two leagues in the international Communist movement. We argued that, in future, any such meetings or statements adopted must involve all parties equally in preparation and decision. It was by this method and in this spirit that the 1960 World Conference was convened and prepared.

In a subsequent resolution of support for the main lines of the 1957 declaration our Executive Committee recorded that: "These are precisely the questions discussed and decided on at the 25th Congress of our Party and display the essential identity of our party's outlook with that of the international Communist movement."

At issue here was the autonomy of the parties in deciding their development, programme, policy and tactics.

Before the Second World War most parties, including our own, were putting forward the establishment of Soviets as the way to achieve socialism.

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although in practice the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International was opening up new lines of development.

New Programmatic Positions

After the war the parties in Western Europe, including the Italian, the French and our own, were working out a new programmatic position. In 1951 our party, before the 20th Congress, had adopted *The British Road to Socialism* as our basic line of development which marked a decisive turn from the prewar past on how we saw the advancement to socialism in British political conditions.

The British Road to Socialism argued the case for socialism. It declared that a third world war was neither necessary nor inevitable. It proclaimed the aim of the national independence of the peoples of the British Empire and the national independence of Britain, especially from the US, and declared that national sovereignty was not out of date. It called for the defeat of the right wing in the labour movement, for the unity of the working class and for uniting the majority of the people in an anti-monopoly alliance. It advanced the new central concept of creating through struggle a Parliamentary majority and a people's government pledged to socialism. "Britain will reach socialism by her own road," it declared. "Just as the Russian people realised political power by the Soviet road, which was dictated by their historical conditions and background of Tsarist rule . . . so the British Communists declare that the people of Britain can transform capitalist democracy into a real people's democracy, transforming Parliament, the product of Britain's historic struggle for democracy, into the democratic instrument of the will of the vast majority of her people." It recognised that capitalism would resist this democratic decision of the people even by force, and that the people and the government should be ready decisively to rebuff such attempts.

An interesting point is that this programme, which represented a decisive departure from the past, was printed in full in *Pravda*. It should also be noted that in his memorable speech to the 19th Congress (where Malenkov made the Report of the Central Committee) Stalin, in thanking the Communist parties for their support of the young Soviet Republic in its early days, without which their victory could not have been ensured, urged the Communist parties to raise high the banner of national independence in their respective countries.

In view of all this it can be realised that the decisions of the 20th Congress on these vital questions was received in the parties of Western Europe with particular approval.

Various developments of the parties' programmes in Western Europe, including our own, have taken place since.

Our general position since that historic departure in 1951 can be summed up as follows. We seek the transition to socialism by democratic political struggle. Indispensable for this is the unity of all socialists and Communists in the labour movement, and the defeat of right-wing influence in the movement. Our objective is to win a Parliamentary majority of socialists and Communists in the labour movement, pledged to carry out socialist aims, but we have always stressed the dual aspect of Parliamentary and extra-Parliamentary action. The threat to democratic freedoms comes from the right, not from the left. For the full development of democracy, socialism is needed. Socialism requires not only the common ownership of the big industrial and commercial enterprises, the banks and the land, but the full and consistent development of democracy. Our aim is the construction of socialism in Britain in forms which would guarantee personal freedom, the plurality of political parties, the independence of the trade unions, religious freedom, and freedom of research, cultural, artistic and scientific activities.

Repercussions of 20th Congress on our Party

The internal repercussions in our party, as in most others, of mass repressions and crimes revealed by the 20th Congress were painful and difficult. Thousands of members left. We had accepted the position in the Soviet Union in the thirties, taking the public trials at their face value, and not knowing the facts about the mass repressions. We were rarely critical of deficiencies, while understandably welcoming the great advances, and expressing solidarity with the first land of socialism against its enemies.

It is easy to see in retrospect that we were wrong. The resolution of our Executive Committee on the lessons of the 20th Congress (May 13, 1956) openly acknowledged and regretted our mistakes, although observing that this did not mean "that in the past we have defended mistaken policies in the knowledge that they were mistaken". It added: "There is in the future bound to be a more critical examination of policies from whatever quarter they come," but on the firm basis of international solidarity.

Because of its working-class democratic base, and being steeped in the tradition and practice of our labour movement, there was no cult of the individual in our party in the sense we have been examining. Our party primarily was based on the struggle in our own country. But in the aftermath of the 20th Congress, we further developed our programme and also developed our democratic

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life on the basis of a commission appointed to examine it. (See *Inner Party Democracy,* CP, 16 King Street, London.)

We had still more open discussion at Congresses and throughout the party, while preserving the main point of democratic centralism that once a decision on policy has been democratically reached, it is carried out by all. We fought still more strongly for our central strategy of left unity and greatly improved our general position in the labour movement.

World Conference 1960

The first real postwar conference of the parties on a world scale was held in 1960. It was attended by 81 parties, the significant absentee being the Yugoslavs. It was democratically prepared.

The main statement, which was adopted unanimously at the meeting, was a comprehensive survey of the international situation, the war danger and the role of US imperialism; the breakdown of colonialism and the problems of national liberation; the relations between socialist states; unity and the forms of transition to socialism. There was a relatively short section on the Communist parties and only a few general paragraphs on ideology. On the key issues of detente, the possibility of preventing world war, the different forms of transition to socialism and the relations between socialist states, the positions remained relatively unchanged. The 1957 declaration had stressed the need for a twin fight, against revisionism and dogmatism. The new statement dilated on this, and the position of the Yugoslavs was condemned as revisionist. Of course, in the debates in the international Communist movement, parties can have widely different views as to what is revisionist or dogmatist. (See *36 Million Communists Say,* CP, London, 1960.)

At the Conference a considerable battle had gone on in the preparatory meetings between the Chinese CP, supported by the Albanian CP, on these key formulations. China's agreement was reluctant and not long afterwards the Chinese CP went on a different road on these questions, especially on the possibility of preventing war and different forms of transition to socialism. The resultant long drawn-out split in the movement is well known. This disagreement on principle was not with the CPSU alone, but with the overwhelming majority of the parties.

But proceeding from this, and the acute differences in tactics which resulted, the matter was further aggravated by state differences (the border, nuclear weapons, etc.). There is little doubt that People's China, a new socialist power in her own right, was not accorded equal treatment during Stalin's leadership and there was interference in the internal affairs of the Chinese CP. Under Khrushchov's leadership the matters also became personalised. On the Chinese side, however, the problem escalated into a general baseless and non-Marxist attack on the Soviet Union as social imperialism, to which, unfortunately, some Soviet Communist leaders have replied in kind, and a position on European issues which no European CP could but oppose. The cultural revolution and similar convulsions obviously reflect divisions in the Chinese leadership and were accompanied by a departure from their own previous Congress decisions on peaceful coexistence. These are acute problems which will take some time to solve, but as both states are socialist, real negotiation must eventually ensue. As for the party relations and question of policy, they must and can only be solved by mutual discussion. The day is passed when one group of parties can "excommunicate" another.

1969 World Conference

With the 1969 World Conference of the parties the relations between the parties reached a new and important stage. The matter was complicated by the split with China, the intervention of some Warsaw Pact countries in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the further development of all parties as independent bodies playing an increasing role, in some cases a decisive role, in the mass politics of their countries. Again the Conference was democratically prepared on the basis of complete equality of the parties. The main document was limited in scope in that it dealt with the "tasks at the present stage of the struggle against imperialism and united action of the Communists and workers' parties and all anti-imperialist forces". It covered four sections: imperialism; anti-imperialist forces; for united action; Communist and workers' parties.

There is no doubt the 1969 Conference again played a very important part in promoting unity, in the fight for peace, in support of national liberation and of Vietnam in particular. Bilateral relations between parties have also thrived.

But there were still many problems. Not all parties were present. Notable absentees included China, Albania, Korea, Vietnam, Japan and Yugoslavia, and, for different reasons, Cuba was present as an observer. There were those parties who made a comprehensive critique of China, although this was not included in the statement. There were others, including our own, who did not do so. There were the differences on the Czechoslovak events. Yet the statement contained a correct presentation of the new agreed principles of relations between socialist states. The previous condemnation of Yugoslavia had gone.

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On the important issue of the relations between parties, the statement called for the highest degree of unity as the most vital factor in rallying together all the anti-imperialist forces. The relations between parties, the statement went on, are based on "the principles of proletarian internationalism, solidarity and mutual support, respect for independence and equality, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs". Strict adherence to these principles was regarded as indispensable and, it went on, "all parties have equal rights". As there is no leading centre of the international Communist movement, voluntary co-ordination of the actions of the parties in order to effectively carry out the tasks before them acquires increased importance. Marxist-Leninists, it said, "are both patriots and internationalists".

As each party is sovereign and only its respective national congress can decide policy, the principle of majority and minority cannot prevail in relations between parties. Agreement can only be reached by consensus and not by vote.

We made some reservations on the main document adopted by the Conference. Our National Executive, which welcomed the Conference statement in general, declared:

> "While the principles of relations between socialist countries and between Communist parties, as laid down in the document, are acceptable, the Executive Committee believes that their inclusion goes beyond the main purposes of the document as defined in the agenda. Furthermore, if such questions were to be dealt with in the document, then they should not have been confined to a mere statement of principle, but should have covered the implementation of these principles in actual life and so enabled a discussion in depth on the problems that have arisen in this field." (*Documents of the World Communist Conference*, June 1969, CP, London, 1969.)

Great Tasks Lie Ahead

The international Communist movement today is the most important political force in the world. Ultimately the strength of that force depends on the work and effectiveness of the sovereign parties in their own countries. Equally the socialist movement of the working class is and must be internationalist. There is no party strong enough not to require the comradely solidarity of all.

Great tasks lie ahead of all of us, not only to prevent war, but to achieve socialist transformation in our own countries.

Looking back, the 20th Congress, whatever the trials and tribulations it brought, was a great political turning point for all of us, and not least for the heroic people of the Soviet Union who sacrificed so much to build socialism, and to bring victory in the Second World War, even while still suffering from the temporary deformation of their own system. It is to their everlasting credit and to the credit of their party, the CPSU, that they had the will and the strength boldly to expose and root out these deformations.

A selection from our programme for 1976

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Document:

On Overcoming the Cult of the Individual and its Consequences

Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

June 30, 1956

I

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union notes with satisfaction that the historic 20th Congress of the CPSU has been welcomed entirely and supported wholeheartedly by our party as a whole, by the entire Soviet people, by the fraternal Communist and Workers' parties, by working people of the great community of socialist nations, and by millions of people in the capitalist and colonial countries. And this is quite understandable, for the 20th Party Congress, marking as it did a new stage in the creative development of Marxism-Leninism, gave a thorough-going analysis of the present international situation both at home and in the world, equipped the Communist Party and the Soviet people as a whole with a magnificent plan for the continued effort for building Communism, and opened up new prospects for united action of all working-class parties in averting the danger of war, and on behalf of the interests of labour.

The Soviet people, carrying out the decisions of the 20th Congress, are gaining more and more outstanding achievements in every aspect of the country's political, economic and cultural life under the leadership of the Communist Party. The Soviet people have rallied still more closely behind the Communist Party and are showing a wealth of constructive initiative in their efforts to accomplish the tasks set before them by the 20th Congress.

The period which has passed since the Congress was held has shown also the great and vital importance of its decisions for the international Communist and labour movement, for the struggle of all progressive forces to strengthen world peace. The important theoretical theses the Congress laid down on the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, on the possibility of preventing wars in modern times, on the multiplicity of forms of the transition of nations to socialism, are having a favourable effect on the international situation, promoting the relaxation of tension, greater unity of action of all the forces working for peace and democracy, and the strengthening of the positions of the world socialist system.

While the Soviet people and the working people of the people's democracies and of the world as a whole have met the historic decisions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU with great enthusiasm and with a new upsurge of constructive initiative and revolutionary energy, they have caused alarm and irritation in the camp of the enemies of the working class. Reactionary circles in the United States and in some other capitalist powers obviously feel uneasy about the great programme to strengthen peace which the 20th Congress of the CPSU has charted. Their uneasiness increases as this programme is being put into operation, vigorously and consistently.

Why are the enemies of Communism and socialism making most of their attacks on the shortcomings about which the Central Committee of our party told the 20th Congress of the CPSU? The reason they are doing so is to divert the attention of the working class and its parties from the main issues which were raised at the 20th Party Congress and which were meant to clear the way to further progress being made in the cause of peace, socialism and working-class unity.

The decisions of the 20th Party Congress and the foreign and home policy of the Soviet government have created confusion in imperialist quarters in the United States and some other countries.

The bold and consistent foreign policy of the USSR, directed towards ensuring peace and co-operation between nations regardless of their social systems, is winning support from the great masses of the people in all countries of the world, extending the front of peace-loving nations and causing a profound crisis in the cold war policy, a policy of building up military blocs and stockpiling arms. It is no accident that it is the imperialist elements in the United States that have

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been making the greatest fuss over the efforts made in the USSR to combat the cult of the individual. The existence of negative factors arising from the cult of the individual was profitable for them in order to fight socialism with these facts at their disposal. Now that our party is boldly overcoming the consequences of the cult of the individual, the imperialists see in it a factor making for our country's faster progress towards Communism, and weakening the positions of capitalism.

The ideologists of capitalism, in an effort to undermine the great power of attraction of the decisions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU and their influence on the broadest masses of the people, are resorting to all manner of tricks and ruses to distract the attention of the working people from the progressive and inspiring ideas the socialist world puts forward before humanity.

The bourgeois press has lately launched a large-scale campaign of anti-Soviet slander, which the reactionary circles are trying to justify by some of the facts connected with the cult of the individual of J. V. Stalin denounced by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The sponsors of this campaign are exerting every effort to "trouble the waters", to conceal the fact that what is meant is a stage the Soviet Union has passed through in its development; they are out to suppress and misrepresent the fact that in the years that have passed since Stalin's death the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet government have been acting with exceptional perseverance and resolution to remove the after-effects of the cult of the individual, and have been making steady progress in solving new problems for the sake of strengthening peace, and building Communism, in the interest of the people at large.

Bourgeois ideologists, in launching their campaign of slander, are trying to cast a slur once more, and again to no avail, on the great ideas of Marxism-Leninism, to shake the trust the working people have in the world's first socialist country —the USSR—and to sow confusion in the ranks of their international Communist and labour movement.

Historical experience indicates that the opponents of international proletarian unity have in the past attempted more than once to take advantage of what they believed to be opportune moments for undermining the international unity of the Communist and Workers' parties, for dividing the international labour movement, for weakening the forces of socialism. But each time the Communist and Workers' parties have discerned the intrigues of the enemies of socialism, have rallied their ranks still more closely, demonstrating their unshakeable political unity, and their unbreakable loyalty to the ideas of Marxism-Leninism.

The fraternal Communist and Workers' parties have detected this move of the enemies of socialism in good time, too, and are giving it a fitting rebuff. It would be incorrect, on the other hand, to shut one's eyes to the fact that some of our friends abroad are still not quite clear on the cult of the individual and its consequences and are sometimes giving incorrect interpretations to some of the points connected with the cult of the individual.

The party bases its criticism of the cult of the individual on the principles of Marxism-Leninism. For over three years our party has been waging a constant fight against the cult of the person of J. V. Stalin, and persistently overcoming its harmful consequences. It is only natural that this question should have entered as an important item into the deliberations of the 20th Congress of the CPSU and its decisions. The Congress recognised that the Central Committee had taken perfectly correct and timely action against the cult of the individual which, as long as it was widespread, belittled the role of the party and the masses, whittled down the role of collective leadership in the party and often led to serious omissions in its work, and to gross violation of socialist law. The congress instructed the Central Committee to carry out consistently the measures for removing wholly and entirely the cult of the individual, foreign to Marxism-Leninism, for removing its consequences in every aspect of party, governmental and ideological activity, and for strict enforcement of the standards of party life and of the principles of collective party leadership elaborated by the great Lenin.

In combating the cult of the individual the party guides itself by the well-known theses of Marxism-Leninism on the role of the masses, of parties and individuals in history, and on the impermissibility of a cult of the person of a political leader, however great his merits may be. Karl Marx, the founder of scientific Communism, emphasising his revulsion for "any cult of the individual", declared that he and Friedrich Engels joined the Association of Communists "on condition that everything making for superstitious worshipping of authorities would be thrown out of it". (*Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Works,* Vol. 26, First Russian Edition, pp. 487-8.)

In building up our Communist Party, V. I. Lenin was irreconcilable in fighting the anti-Marxist conception of the "hero" and the "mob", emphatically denouncing the counter-posing of individual heroes to the masses of the people. "The intellect of scores of millions," said V. I. Lenin, "creates something immeasurably higher than a

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forecast of the greatest genius." (*Works*, Vol. 26, p. 431.)

In raising the question of combating the cult of the person of J. V. Stalin, the Central Committee of the CPSU acted on the assumption that the cult of the individual contradicted the essence of the socialist system and was becoming a brake on the way of progress of Soviet democracy and of the advance of Soviet society towards Communism.

The 20th Congress of the party, on the Central Committee's initiative, found it necessary to speak openly and boldly about the grave consequences of the cult of the individual, of the serious mistakes made in the latter period of Stalin's life, and to appeal to the party as a whole to put an end, through combined efforts, to everything that the cult of the individual had brought in its train. In doing so the Central Committee realised that the frank admission of the errors made would give rise to certain negative features and excesses which the enemies could use. The bold and ruthless self-criticism in matters arising from the cult of the individual has been fresh, ample evidence of the strength and vitality of our party and of the Soviet socialist system. It can be said with confidence that none of the ruling parties in capitalist countries would ever have ventured to do anything like this. Quite the reverse; they would have tried to pass over in silence and to hide from the people facts as unpleasant as these. But the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, reared as it is on the revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism, has spoken the whole truth, however bitter it might have been. The party took this step on its own initiative, guiding itself by considerations of principle. It is believed that even if its action against the Stalin cult caused some momentary difficulties, it would be of enormous value in the long run from the point of view of the basic interests and ultimate goals of the working class. Sure guarantees are thereby created against things like the cult of the individual reappearing in our party or in our country ever again, and also for the leadership of the party and the country being effected collectively, through enforcing the Marxist-Leninist policy, in conditions of full-scale party democracy, with the active and constructive participation of millions of working people and with the utmost development of Soviet democracy.

By taking a determined stand against the cult of the individual and its consequences, and by openly criticising the errors it caused, the party has once more demonstrated its loyalty to the immortal principles of Marxism-Leninism, its loyalty to the interests of the people, its concern for providing the best possible conditions for the development of party and Soviet democracy in the interest of the successful building of Communism in this country. The Central Committee of the CPSU places on record the fact that the discussions on the cult of the individual and its consequences by party organisations and at general meetings of working people have been marked by a great measure of activity, shown both by the party membership and by non-party people, and that the CPSU Central Committee's line has been welcomed and supported wholly and entirely both by the party and by the people.

The facts of the violations of socialist law and other errors connected with the cult of the individual of J. V. Stalin, which the party has made public, naturally create a feeling of bitterness and deep regret. But the Soviet people realise that the condemnation of the cult of the individual was indispensable for the building of Communism in which they are all playing their full part. The Soviet people have seen the party taking persistent practical steps for the past few years to remove the after-effects of the cult of the individual in every field of party, governmental, economic and cultural development. Thanks to this effort, the party, which no longer has its internal forces bound by anything, has drawn still closer to the people and has today developed its creative activity more than ever before.

II

How, indeed, could it happen that the cult of the person of Stalin, with all the attendant adverse consequences, could have appeared and gained currency in conditions of the Soviet system?

This question should be examined against the background of the objective, concrete historical conditions under which socialism was built in the USSR, and also some subjective factors arising from Stalin's personal qualities.

The October Socialist Revolution has gone down in history as a classic example of a revolutionary transformation of capitalist society under the leadership of the working class. The example of the heroic struggle of the Bolshevik Party, of the world's first socialist state, the USSR, is something from which the Communist parties of other lands, indeed all progressive and democratic forces, are learning how to solve the fundamental social problems generated by modern social development. Throughout the nearly forty years that have gone into building socialist society, the working people of this country have accumulated a wealth of experience, which is being studied and assimilated by the working people of other socialist nations, creatively and in keeping with their specific conditions.

This was the first experience history has ever known of building a socialist society which was

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taking shape through the quest for and practical proving of many truths which until then were known to socialists only in general outline, theoretically. For over a quarter of a century the Soviet Union was the only country blazing the path to socialism for mankind. It was like a besieged fortress in capitalist encirclement. The enemies of the Soviet Union, both in the West and in the East, continued to plot new "crusades" against the USSR after the failure of the 14-power intervention of 1918-20. The enemies sent large numbers of spies and wreckers into the USSR, trying by every means at their disposal to destroy the world's first socialist state. The threat of renewed imperialist aggression against the USSR increased particularly after fascism's advent to power in Germany in 1933, which proclaimed its purpose to be that of destroying Communism, that of destroying the Soviet Union, the world's first state of working people. Everyone remembers the establishment of what was called the "anti-Comintern pact" and the "Berlin-Rome-Tokyo axis", which were actively supported by the forces of international reaction as a whole. With a threat of a new war growing more and more evident, and with the western powers cold-shouldering the measures the Soviet Union more than once proposed to put fascism in a straitjacket and organise collective security, the Soviet Union had to exert every effort for strengthening its defences and countering the intrigues of the hostile capitalist encirclement. The party had to teach the people as a whole to be always vigilant and prepared to face enemies from without.

The intrigues of international reaction were all the more dangerous since there was a bitter class struggle going on within the country for a long time to see "who beats whom?" After Lenin's death, hostile trends began gaining currency in the party: Trotskyites, right-wing opportunists and bourgeois nationalists whose stand was one of opposition to Lenin's theory about the possibility of the victory of socialism in one country, a stand which would in fact have led to the restoration of capitalism in the USSR. The party launched a ruthless struggle against those enemies of Leninism.

In carrying out Lenin's behests, the Communist Party steered a course towards the country's socialist industrialisation, collectivising agriculture and making a cultural revolution. The Soviet people and the Communist Party have had to overcome unimaginable difficulties and obstacles in solving these supreme problems of building a socialist society in a single country. Our country had to overcome its age-old backwardness and reshape the national economy as a whole along new, socialist lines, within the historically shortest period of time, and without any economic assistance whatsoever from outside.

This complicated international and internal situation called for iron discipline, tireless enhancement of vigilance, stringent centralisation of leadership, which could not but have had an adverse effect on the development of some democratic forms. In the bitter struggle against the whole world of imperialism our country had to accept some limitations to democracy, which were justified logically by our people's struggle for socialism in conditions of capitalist encirclement.

But even at that time the party and the people regarded these limitations as temporary and due to be removed as the strength of the Soviet state grew and the forces of democracy and peace developed throughout the world. The people made these temporary sacrifices conscientiously, seeing the Soviet social system make progress day by day.

All these difficulties on the way to socialism have been overcome by the Soviet people under the leadership of the Communist Party and its Central Committee, which consistently pursued Lenin's general line.

The victory of socialism in this country, faced as it was with hostile encirclement and the ever-present threat of attack from without, was an historic exploit of the Soviet people. Through carrying out its first Five-Year Plans, the economically backward country made a giant leap ahead in its economic and cultural development, thanks to the strenuous and heroic efforts of the people and the party. With the progress achieved in socialist construction the living standards of the working people were raised and unemployment abolished once and for all. A thorough cultural revolution took place. Within a short space of time the Soviet people produced great numbers of technicians who rose to the level of world technological progress and brought Soviet science and technology to one of the leading places in the world. It was the great party of Communists that was the inspiring and organising force behind these victories. By the example of the USSR the working people of the whole world have seen for themselves that the workers and peasants, once they have taken power into their own hands, can build and develop successfully, without any capitalists and landowners, their own socialist state, representing and defending the interests of the people at large. All this has played a great and inspiring role in increasing the influence of the Communist and Workers' parties in all the countries of the world.

J. V. Stalin, who held the post of General Secretary of the party's Central Committee for a long period, worked actively in common with other leaders of the party to put into effect Lenin's

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behests. He was faithful to Marxism-Leninism, and as a theorist and an organiser of high calibre he led the party's fight against the Trotskyites, right-wing opportunists, and bourgeois nationalists, against the intrigues of capitalists from without. It was in this political and ideological fight that Stalin earned great authority and popularity. But there was a mistaken practice of associating all our great victories with his name. The achievements gained by the Communist Party and by the Soviet Union, the eulogies of Stalin made him dizzy. That being the situation, the cult of the person of Stalin was being gradually built up.

Some of J. V. Stalin's individual qualities, which were regarded as negative yet by V. I. Lenin, contributed in great measure to building up the cult of the individual. Towards the end of 1922 Lenin said in a letter to the coming party Congress:

"Comrade Stalin, after taking over the post of General Secretary, accumulated in his hands immeasurable power, and I am not certain whether he will be always able to use this power with the required care." In addition to this letter, writing early in January 1923, V. I. Lenin reverted to some of Stalin's individual qualities, intolerable in a leader. "Stalin is excessively rude," Lenin wrote, "and this defect, which can be freely tolerated in our midst and in contacts among us, Communists, becomes a defect which cannot be tolerated in one holding the post of General Secretary. I therefore propose to the comrades to consider the method by which to remove Stalin from his post, and to select another man for it who, above all, would differ from Stalin in only one quality, namely, greater tolerance, greater loyalty, greater politeness and a more considerate attitude towards the comrades, a less capricious temper, etc."

These letters of Lenin's were brought to the knowledge of the delegations to the 13th Party Congress which met soon after Lenin died. After discussing these documents it was recognised as desirable to leave Stalin in the position of General Secretary on the understanding, however, that he would heed the critical remarks of V. I. Lenin and draw all the proper conclusions from them.

Having retained the post of General Secretary of the Central Committee, Stalin did take into account the critical remarks of Vladimir Ilyich during the period immediately following his death. Later on, however, Stalin, having overestimated his own merits beyond all measure, came to believe in his own infallibility. He began transferring some of the limitations on party and Soviet democracy, unavoidable in conditions of a bitter struggle against the class enemy and its agents, and subsequently during the war against the Nazi invaders, into the standards of party and governmental life, grossly flouting the Leninist principles of leadership. Plenary meetings of the Central Committee and Congresses of the party were held irregularly and later were not held at all for many years. Stalin, in fact, was above criticism.

Great harm to the cause of socialist construction, and the development of democracy inside the party and the state was caused by Stalin's erroneous formula alleging that, with the advance of the Soviet Union to socialism, the class struggle would grow increasingly sharp. This formula, which is true only for certain stages of the transition period, when the question of "who will win?" was being decided, when a persistent class struggle for the construction of the foundations of socialism was proceeding, was advanced to the foreground in 1937, at a time when socialism had already triumphed in our country, when the exploiting classes and their economic base had been eliminated. In practice, this erroneous theoretical formula was used to justify gross violations of socialist law and mass repressions.

It is precisely in these conditions that, among other things, a special status was created for the state security organs, which enjoyed tremendous trust because they had rendered undoubted services to the people and the country in defending the gains of the revolution. For a long time the state security organs justified this trust and their special status evoked no danger. The situation changed after Stalin's personal control over them had gradually superseded control by the party and the government, and the usual exercise of the standards of justice was not infrequently replaced by his individual decisions. The situation became still more aggravated when the criminal gang of the agent of international imperialism, Beria, got to the head of the state security organs. Serious violations of Soviet law and mass repressions then occurred. As a result of the machinations of our enemies, many honest Communists and non-party people had been slandered and suffered, although completely innocent.

The 20th Party Congress and the entire policy of the Central Committee after Stalin's death are vivid evidence of the fact that inside the Central Committee of the party there was a Leninist core of leaders who correctly understood the pressing needs in the spheres both of home and foreign policy. One cannot say that no counter-measures were taken against the negative phenomena that were associated with the cult of the individual and impeded the advance of socialism. Moreover, there were definite periods during the war, for example, when Stalin's individual actions were sharply restricted, when the negative consequences of lawlessness, arbitrariness, etc., were substantially reduced.

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It is known that precisely during the war members of the Central Committee as well as outstanding Soviet military leaders took control of definite sections of activity in the rear and at the front, independently took decisions, and by their organisational, political, economic and military work, together with local party and government organisations, secured the victory of the Soviet people in the war. After the victory, the negative consequences of the cult of the individual again became strongly manifest.

Immediately after Stalin's death the Leninist core of the Central Committee took the path of vigorous struggle against the cult of the individual and its grave consequences.

The question may arise: Why then had these people not come out openly against Stalin and removed him from leadership? In the prevailing conditions this could not be done. The facts unquestionably show that Stalin was guilty of many unlawful acts that were committed, particularly in the last period of his life. However, one must not forget at the same time that the Soviet people knew Stalin as a man always acting in the defence of the USSR against the machinations of the enemies, and working for the cause of socialism. In this work he at times applied unseemly methods, and violated the Leninist principles and standards of party life. Herein was the tragedy of Stalin. And all this together made difficult the struggle against the lawless actions that were then being committed, because the successes in building socialism and strengthening the USSR were, in the atmosphere of the cult of the individual, ascribed to Stalin.

Any opposition to him under these circumstances would not have been understood by the people, and it was not at all a matter of lack of personal courage. It is clear that anyone who in these circumstances would have come out against Stalin would have got no support from the people. What is more, such opposition would have been evaluated, in those circumstances, as being against the cause of building socialism, as an extremely dangerous threat to the unity of the party and the whole state in conditions of capitalist encirclement. Moreover, the achievements of the working people of the Soviet Union under the leadership of the Communist Party instilled legitimate pride in the heart of every Soviet man and created an atmosphere in which individual errors and shortcomings seemed less important against the background of the tremendous achievements, and the negative consequences of these errors were rapidly compensated by the immensely growing vital forces of the party and Soviet society.

It should also be borne in mind that many facts about wrong actions of Stalin, particularly in the sphere of violating Soviet law, became known only lately, already after Stalin's death, chiefly in connection with the exposure of Beria's gang and the establishment of party control over the security organs.

Such are the chief conditions and reasons that resulted in the cult of J. V. Stalin's personality coming into being and spreading. All this, of course, explains, but by no means justifies, the cult of J. V. Stalin's personality and its consequences, which have been so sharply and justly condemned by our party.

III

The cult of the individual, unquestionably, did grave harm to the cause of the Communist Party, to Soviet society. But it would be a great mistake to draw conclusions about some changes having taken place in the social system of the USSR from the fact that in the past there was the cult of the individual, or to see a source of this cult in the nature of the Soviet social system. Both conclusions are utterly wrong, as this is not in accordance with reality and is contrary to the facts.

Notwithstanding all the evil done to the party and the people by the cult of Stalin's personality, he could not, and did not change the nature of our social system. No cult of the individual could change the nature of the socialist state, which is based on social ownership of the means of production, the alliance of the working class and the peasantry, and friendship between the peoples, although this cult did cause serious harm to the development of socialist democracy and the promotion of the creative initiative of millions of people.

To think that one personality, even such a great one as Stalin, could change our social and political system is to lapse into profound contradiction with the facts, with Marxism, with truth, is to lapse into idealism. This would mean ascribing to an individual such excessive, supernatural powers as the ability to change a system of society and, moreover, such a social system in which the many-million strong masses of the working people are the decisive force.

As is known, the nature of a social and political system is determined by its mode of production, by who owns the means of production in society, by which class wields political power. The whole world knows that in our country, as a result of the October Revolution and the triumph of socialism, a socialist mode of production has been established, that it is now already almost 40 years that power has belonged to the working class and the peasantry. Thanks to this the social system is growing stronger from year to year, and its productive forces are growing. Even our ill-wishers

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cannot fail to recognise this fact.

The cult of the individual, as is known, resulted in some serious errors being made in the direction of various branches of activity of the party and the Soviet state, both in the domestic life of the Soviet Union and in its foreign policy. Among other things, one can point out serious errors committed by Stalin in the direction of agriculture, in organising the country's preparedness to rebuff the fascist invaders, and gross arbitrariness that led to the conflict in the relations with Yugoslavia in the postwar period. These errors harmed the development of individual aspects of the life of the Soviet state, and especially, in the last years of J. V. Stalin's life, impaired the development of Soviet society, but, naturally, did not divert it from the correct road of advancement to Communism.

Our enemies allege that the cult of Stalin's personality was engendered not by definite historical conditions that have now lapsed into the past, but by the Soviet system itself, by, in their opinion, its undemocratic nature, etc. Such slanderous assertions are refuted by the entire history of the development of the Soviet state. The Soviets as a new democratic form of state power came into being as a result of the revolutionary creative activity of the broadest masses of the people who rose in struggle for freedom. They have been and remain organs of genuine people's power. It is precisely the Soviet system that has made it possible to tap the tremendous creative energy of the people. It brought into motion inexhaustible forces inherent in the masses of the people, drew millions of people into conscientious administration of the state, into active, creative participation in the construction of socialism. In a brief historical period, the Soviet state emerged victorious from the severest trials, stood the test in the fire of the Second World War.

When the last exploiting classes were eliminated in our country, when socialism became the dominant system in the entire national economy, and the international position of our country altered fundamentally, the bounds of Soviet democracy expanded immeasurably and are continuing to expand. In contrast to any bourgeois democracy, Soviet democracy not only proclaims but materially ensures all members of society without exception the right to work, education, rest and recreation, to participation in state affairs, freedom of speech, press and conscience, a real possibility for the free development of personal abilities, and all other democratic rights and freedoms. The essence of democracy lies not in formal signs but in whether the political power serves and reflects the will and fundamental interests of the majority of the people, the interests of the working folk. The entire domestic and foreign policy of the Soviet state shows that our system is a genuinely democratic, genuinely people's system. The supreme aim and daily concern of the Soviet state is the utmost advancement of the living standards of the population, the ensuring of a peaceful existence for its people.

Evidence of the further development of Soviet democracy is the measures that are being carried out by the party and the government for broadening the rights and competence of the Union republics, the strict observance of the law, reconstruction of the planning system with a view to unleashing local initiative, activising the work of the local Soviets, developing criticism and self-criticism.

Notwithstanding the cult of the individual and in spite of it, the mighty initiative of the masses of the people, led by the Communist Party, initiative brought into being by our system, pursued its great historical task, overcoming all obstacles on the road to the construction of socialism. And herein lies the highest expression of the democracy of the Soviet socialist system. The outstanding victories of socialism in our country did not come by themselves. They were achieved by the tremendous organisational and educational work of the party and its local organisations, by the fact that the party always educated its cadres and all Communists in the spirit of loyalty to Marxism-Leninism, in the spirit of devotion to the cause of Communism. Soviet society is strong by the consciousness of the masses of the people. Its historical destinies have been and are determined by the constructive labour of our heroic working class, glorious collective farm peasantry, and people's intelligentsia.

Eliminating the consequences of the cult of the individual, re-establishing the Bolshevik standards of party life, developing socialist democracy, our party has further strengthened its ties with the broad masses of the people and has rallied them still closer under the great banner of Lenin.

The fact that the party itself has boldly and openly raised the question of eliminating the cult of the individual, of the impermissible errors committed by Stalin, is convincing proof that the party firmly guards Leninism, the cause of socialism and Communism, the observance of socialist law, the interests of the peoples and the rights of all Soviet citizens. This is the best proof of the strength and viability of the Soviet socialist system. At the same time it shows a determination finally to overcome the consequences of the cult of the individual and to prevent the recurrence of such errors in the future.

The condemnation of the cult of J. V. Stalin and its consequences has evoked endorsement and

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a broad response in all fraternal Communist and workers' parties. Noting the tremendous significance of the 20th Congress of the CPSU for the entire international Communist and labour movement, the Communists in the foreign countries regard the struggle against the cult of the individual and its consequences as a struggle for the purity of the principles of Marxism-Leninism, for a creative approach to the current problems of the international labour movement, for the consolidation and further development of the principles of proletarian internationalism.

Statements by a number of fraternal Communist parties express endorsement and support for the measures taken by our party against the cult of the individual and its consequences. Summarising the conclusions to be drawn from the discussion of the decisions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the party's newspaper *Jenminjihpao,* in an editorial "On the historical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat", wrote:

"The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, following Lenin's behests, seriously regards some grave errors committed by Stalin in the direction of socialist construction, and their consequences. The graveness of these consequences raised before the Communist Party of the Soviet Union the necessity, simultaneously with recognising Stalin's great services, of laying bare most sharply the essence of the errors committed by Stalin, and calling upon the entire party to take care to prevent a repetition of this, and to root out vigorously the unhealthy consequences of these errors. We, Chinese Communists, profoundly believe that after the sharp criticism that was displayed at the 20th Congress of the CPSU, all the active factors that were strongly restrained in the past because of certain political errors, will surely come into motion everywhere, that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet people will be still more united and rallied than before in the struggle for the construction of a great Communist society, unprecedented in the history of mankind, for lasting world peace."

"The merit of the leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union," a statement of the Political Bureau of the French Communist Party says, "is the fact that they have undertaken to correct the errors and shortcomings associated with the cult of the individual, which testifies to the strength and unity of the great party of Lenin and the trust it enjoys among the Soviet people and to its prestige in the international movement." The General Secretary of the National Committee of the United States Communist Party, Comrade Eugene Dennis, noting the great significance of the 20th Congress of the CPSU, says in his well-known article: "The 20th Congress strengthened world peace and social progress. It marked a new stage in the advancement of socialism and in the struggle for peaceful coexistence that began in Lenin's day, continued in the following years, and is becoming ever more effective and successful."

At the same time it should be noted that in discussing the question of the cult of the individual, the causes of the cult of the individual and its consequences for our social system are not always correctly interpreted. Thus, for example, Comrade Togliatti's comprehensive and interesting interview given to the magazine *Nuovi Argomenti,* along with many quite important and correct conclusions, contains also wrong propositions. Particularly, one cannot agree with Comrade Togliatti's putting the question of whether Soviet society has not arrived at "certain forms of degeneration". There is no grounds for putting such a question. It is all the more incomprehensible in that in another part of his interview Comrade Togliatti quite correctly says: "It is necessary to draw the conclusion that the essence of the socialist system was not lost, just as not a single one of the previous gains was lost, and above all the support of the system by the masses of the workers, peasants and intelligentsia who make up Soviet society was not lost. This very support shows that, notwithstanding everything, this society has preserved its basic democratic nature."

Indeed, without the support of the broadest masses of the people for the Soviet government and the policy of the Communist Party, our country could not have built up in an unprecedentedly brief period a mighty socialist industry and effected the collectivisation of agriculture, it could not have won the Second World War, on the outcome of which the destinies of all mankind depended. As a result of the utter rout of Hitlerism, Italian fascism and Japanese militarism, the forces of the Communist movement have broadly developed, the Communist Parties of Italy, France and other capitalist countries have grown and become mass parties, the people's democratic system has been established in a number of European and Asian countries, the world system of socialism has arisen and become consolidated, the national liberation movement, which has brought about the disintegration of the colonial system of imperialism, has scored unprecedented successes.

IV

Unanimously approving the decisions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU, which condemn the cult of the individual, the Communists and all Soviet people see in them evidence of the growing power of our party, of the strength of its Leninist

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principles, unity and solidarity. "The party of the revolutionary proletariat," V. I. Lenin pointed out, "is sufficiently strong to openly criticise itself, to call a mistake a mistake, and a weakness a weakness." (*Works,* Vol. 21, p. 150.) Guided by this Leninist principle, our party will continue, in future too, boldly to disclose, openly to criticise, and resolutely to eliminate mistakes and blunders in its work.

The Central Committee of the CPSU considers that the work accomplished by the party so far in overcoming the cult of the individual and its consequences has already yielded positive results.

On the basis of the decisions of the 20th Congress of the party, the Central Committee of the CPSU calls upon all party organisations:

Consistently to adhere in all their work to the most important principles of the teaching of Marxism-Leninism about the people being the makers of history, the creators of all the material and spiritual riches of mankind, on the decisive role of the Marxist party in the revolutionary struggle for the transformation of society, for the victory of Communism;

Persistently to continue the work, conducted in recent years by the Central Committee of the party, for the strictest observation by all party organisations, from top to bottom, of the Leninist principles of party leadership, and primarily of the supreme principle of collective leadership, the observation of the norms of party life, as fixed by the rules of the party, of developing criticism and self-criticism;

Fully to restore the principles of Soviet socialist democracy as laid down in the Constitution of the Soviet Union finally to correct the violations of revolutionary socialist laws;

To mobilise our cadres, all Communists and the broadest masses of the working people, in the struggle for the practical realisation of the targets of the sixth Five-Year Plan, giving the utmost stimulation to the creative initiative and energy of the masses, the true makers of history, in achieving this end.

The 20th Congress of the CPSU pointed out that the most important feature of our epoch is the conversion of socialism into a world system. The most difficult period in the development and consolidation of socialism now lies behind us. Our socialist country has ceased to be a lonely island in an ocean of capitalist states. Today more than one-third of humanity is building a new life under the banner of socialism. The ideas of socialism are winning the support of many, many millions of people in the capitalist countries. The influence of the ideas of socialism is tremendous among the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, who are fighting against all forms of colonialism.

The decisions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU are regarded by all supporters of peace and socialism, by all democratic and progressive circles, as an inspiring programme of struggle for the consolidation of peace throughout the world, for the interests of the working class, for the triumph of the cause of socialism.

Under present conditions, the Communist parties and the whole international labour movement are faced with broad, inspiring prospects—to secure, hand in hand with all the peaceful forces, the prevention of a new world war, to curb the monopolies and ensure lasting peace and the security of the peoples, to put an end to the armaments race and remove from the working peoples the heavy burden of taxes bred by it, to fight for the preservation of the democratic rights and liberties which facilitate the working people's struggle for a better life and a bright future. This is what the millions of ordinary people in every country of the world are vitally interested in. The successful solution of these problems is to a tremendous degree facilitated by the peaceful policy and the ever new successes of the Soviet Union, the Chinese People's Republic and all the other countries advancing on the road of socialism.

In the new historical conditions, such international organisations of the working class as the Comintern and the Cominform have ceased their activities. But this in no way means international solidarity has lost its significance and that there is no longer any need for contacts among the fraternal revolutionary parties adhering to the positions of Marxism-Leninism. At the present time, when the forces of socialism and the influence of socialist ideas have immeasurably grown throughout the world, when different means of achieving socialism in the various countries are

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being revealed, the Marxist working-class parties must naturally preserve and consolidate their ideological unity and fraternal international solidarity in the fight against the threat of a new war, in the fight against the anti-national forces of monopoly capital striving to suppress all the revolutionary and progressive movements. The Communist parties are welded together by the great objective of freeing the working class from the yoke of capital, they are united by their fidelity to the scientific ideology of Marxism-Leninism, to the spirit of proletarian internationalism, by the utmost devotion to the interests of the people.

In their activity under modern conditions, all the Communist parties base themselves on the national peculiarities and conditions of every country, giving the fullest expression to the national interests of their peoples. At the same time, recognising that the struggle for the interests of the working class, for peace and the national independence of their countries is the cause of the entire international proletariat, they are consolidating their ranks and strengthening their contacts and co-operation among themselves. The ideological consolidation and fraternal solidarity of the Marxist parties of the working class in different countries are the more necessary since the capitalist monopolies are creating their own aggressive international coalitions and blocs, such as NATO, SEATO, and the Baghdad Pact, which are directed against the peace-loving peoples, against the national liberation movement, against the working class and the vital interests of the working peoples.

While the Soviet Union is continuing to do very much to bring about a relaxation in international tension—and this is now recognised everywhere—American monopoly capital continues to assign large sums of money for increasing the subversive activities in the socialist countries. When the cold war was at its height, the United States Congress, as is well known, officially appropriated (apart from the funds used unofficially) 100 million dollars for the purposes of conducting subversive activities in the people's democracies and the Soviet Union. Now that the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries are doing everything possible to ease international tension, the cold war adherents are seeking once more to galvanise the cold war, which has been condemned by the peoples of the entire world. This is shown by the decision of the United States Senate to appropriate an additional 25 million dollars for subversive activity, under the cynical pretext of "stimulating freedom" behind the "iron curtain".

We must soberly appraise this fact and draw the necessary conclusions from it. It is clear, for instance, that the anti-popular riots in Poznan have been paid for from this source. But the *agents-provocateurs* and subversive elements who were paid out of the overseas funds had enough "go" in them only for a few hours. The working people of Poznan resisted the hostile actions and provocations. The plans of the dark knights of the "cloak and dagger" have fallen through, their dastardly provocation against the people's power in Poland has failed. All future attempts at subversive actions in the people's democracies are similarly doomed to failure, even though such actions are generously paid for out of funds assigned by the American monopolies. This money may be said to be spent in vain.

All this shows that we must not allow ourselves to be indifferent about the new designs of the imperialist agencies, seeking to penetrate into the socialist countries in order to do harm and disrupt the achievements of the working people.

The forces of imperialist reaction are seeking to divert the working people from the true road of struggle for their interests, to poison their minds with disbelief in the success of the cause of peace and socialism. In spite of all the designs of the ideologists of the capitalist monopolies, the working class, headed by its tried Communist vanguard, will follow its own road, which has already led to the historic conquests of socialism, and will lead to new victories in the cause of peace, democracy and socialism. There can be no doubt that the Communist and Workers' parties of all countries will raise still higher the glorious Marxist banner of proletarian internationalism.

The Soviet people are naturally proud of the fact that our homeland was the first to pave the road to socialism. Now that socialism has become a world system, now that fraternal co-operation and mutual aid have been established among the socialist countries, new favourable conditions have been created for the flourishing of socialist democracy, for the further consolidation of the material and industrial basis of Communism, for a steady rise in the living standards of the working people, for an all-sided development of the personality of the new man, the builder of Communist society. Let the bourgeois ideologists invent fables about a "crisis" of Communism, about "dismay" in the ranks of the Communist parties. It is not the first time that we have heard incantations from enemies. All their predictions have always burst like bubbles. These sorry soothsayers have appeared and disappeared, while the Communist movement, the immortal and inspiring ideas of Marxism-Leninism, have advanced from victory to victory. So it will be in the future, too. No malicious, slanderous outburst of our enemies can stop the invincible, historic march of mankind towards Communism.

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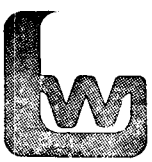

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